



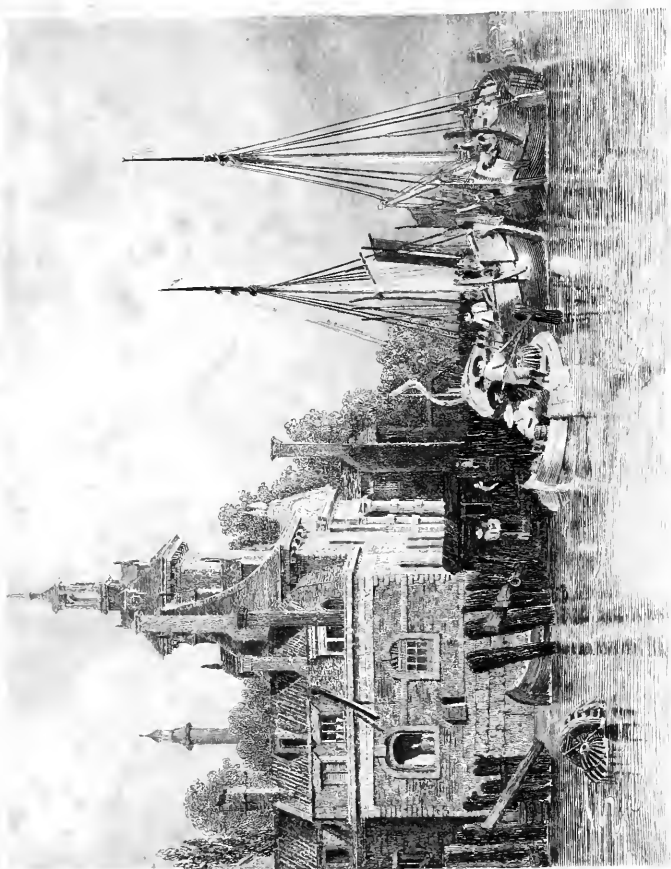
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AUVERGNE,

PIEDMONT, AND SAVOY:

A SUMMER RAMBLE.

BY

CHARLES RICHARD WELD.

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LONDON:

JOHN W. PARKER, WEST STRAND.

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TO

LADY SIMPKINSON,

THIS VOLUME

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HER SINCERE FRIEND,

CHARLES RICHARD WELD.

*Somerset House,  
May, 1850.*

626573

And, O ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,  
Think not of any severing of our loves !  
Yet, in my heart of hearts, I feel your might ;  
I only have relinquished one delight  
To live beneath your more habitual sway.

WORDSWORTH.

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# AUVERGNE, PIEDMONT, & SAVOY:

## A SUMMER RAMBLE.

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### CHAPTER I.

IT was with no inconsiderable difficulty that I satisfactorily answered the important question, which I put to myself more than once as the spring of 1849 ripened into summer,—Where shall I spend my vacation? I say important question, for he whose entire life is a holiday of oppressive idleness little knows the happiness which these yearly breathing-times may be made, by judicious management, to confer on the working-man. They give exulting elasticity to the spirits; destroy incipient disease, so often engendered by too sedentary a life; and are, as it were, a species of winding up of the clockwork of human machinery, which enables it to perform its functions smoothly for another cycle. Democritus Junior wisely said, ‘Although our ordinary air be good, yet it is not amiss to alter it: no better physic than change of air and variety of places. For peregrination charms our senses with such unspeakable and sweet variety, that some count him unhappy that

never travelled.' Travel, therefore, being decided on, the question was—where to go? One consideration happily narrowed the difficulties. This was my resolve to wander on the Continent. Not that I dislike my own country. Far, very far, from this. There is scarcely a scene of beauty in England, Ireland, and Scotland, which I have not visited; nor was it until I had done so, that I sought for more communings with nature in other lands. Among the many advantages derivable from selecting the Continent for a tour, not the least is, that it takes a man away from epistolary intrusions. And in these days, when the fingers of the postman are scarcely ever off your knocker from early foggy morn to smoky London eve,—not to mention the charm of a telegraphic message coming upon you at supernatural hours,—I should like to know how it is possible to cast off the cares of business with these penny plagues drumming away at your mind all day long.

I remember reading an announcement of the London and Brighton Railway Company, offering to convey the mails ten times daily to Brighton without cost to government—the Company expecting to be amply remunerated by carrying merchants and others on their line who would, with such plaguey prospects before them, select Brighton as a happy, peaceful place to abide in during the summer months. Well, there is no accounting for taste. There are those to whom the face of nature is a blank—who, without that perpetual boiling excitement which is only to be

found in great cities, are miserable, and to whose quick bosoms, quiet, as Byron says, is a hell. With all such I differ entirely, and perhaps it may be as well to tell them here, on the threshold as it were, if they contemplate following me, that they will find me leading them more amongst

The pomp of groves and garniture of fields,  
than into crowded cities and towns.

The Continent, then, being resolved on, the next consideration was, seeing that it is a large word, what part of it should be selected for my wanderings.

Extending before me a large comprehensive map of Europe, on which I had traced my previous tours, I saw that within the time at my disposal not much new ground remained for me to break. There were portions of countries in which I had not travelled, which I desired to see; but although they presented the same physical features which they did half a dozen years ago, their people were in a state of active fermentation, which bade fair to make journeying among them far from agreeable.

Delirant reges, plectuntur Achivi,

says Horace, and I had no ambition to be mingled with the Greeks, or people who might come in for unmerited punishment. I was all for peace and tranquillity; and however entertaining and exciting it might be to read at home of the glorious struggles of oppressed nations to obtain freedom, I felt no inclination whatever to be in at the death of oppressors, or

the shooting of patriots. It may appear strange that with these feelings, choice should have been made of France, a country, as all the world knows, famous for its anti-pacific tendencies. But I regarded the people in a meteorological aspect, arguing that, as a natural storm is succeeded by a calm, so their late little ebullition of feeling would, in all human probability, be followed by temporary repose and tranquillity. Much of France was already known to me, but there was a portion of it which I had often intended to visit, but had always been prevented by unforeseen circumstances. This was Auvergne, a country possessing great interest to the lover of beautiful scenery, as well as to the geologist; and I said, if the inhabitants of that province remain, during the period of my visit, as quiet as their extinct volcanos, few obstacles will arise to impede free locomotion. So Auvergne was decided on, as the more immediate object of the Tour; but sundry longing glances were cast at the glorious province of Dauphiné, mercilessly shorn of its euphonious name since the revolution of 1792, and now forming the three departments of Isère, Drôme, and Hautes Alpes. There are giants in that land, whose heads are white with the snow of ages—mountains, in other words, rising in bold and successful rivalry to Alpine elevations. I felt, looking at them even on the cold, flat map, that they were full of magnetical attraction for the tourist, so I indulged in day-dreams that I might be enabled to visit them, climb some of their

rugged sides, and repose in the cool shade beneath their engirdling forests. Then Piedmont seemed but a step removed; and, being there, the eye was lured insensibly over the Graian Alps into Savoy, where the wanderer, as I well knew, finds—

Health in the breeze, and freshness in the gale.

It will be seen in the sequel how far these hopes were realized. With the strong conviction, based on the experience of much travel, that the chances of smoothly gliding from place to place are greatly augmented in proportion to the smallness of the *impedimenta* which a tourist carries with him, my baggage was filed down to the limits of a portmanteau, capable, however, of being expanded (for luggage, like an avalanche, is wonderfully apt to swell in importance as it travels), and a knapsack, an old and valued companion during many Alpine excursions, and one that has stuck to my back as the truest friend through many a trying day.

Having made other little travelling arrangements, I was ready to start. But in the exercise of that glorious liberty which la belle France especially prides herself in, the new Republic decreed, as in the ancient kingly days, that no one would be suffered to travel in their country without a passport, and doubtless, with a particular desire to show the true meaning, according to their Republican ideas, of the ubiquitous national motto, they further decreed that five shillings was to be paid by each person

desirous of spending his money in their territory.\* Now, in the olden time this tax would not have been so much grudged by Englishmen, who happily yet drain the cup to the loyal chorus—God save the Queen!—for then the French passport was headed in imposing characters,—

AU NOM DU ROI,

and was followed by the words—“ Nous, Ambassadeur Extraordinaire et Plenipotentiaire, de Sa Majesté le Roi des Français près Sa Majesté Britannique, &c. Prions les Autorités Civiles et Militaires chargées de la Police Interieure du Royaume, et de tous les Pays Amis ou Alliés de la France, de laisser passer librement,” &c. &c. It was gratifying to be thus taken under the protection of a great ambassador, who, by signing his name at the bottom of the broad sheet, gave evidence of the sincerity of his prayer. And all this was given gratis. Now look on this picture.

‘ RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE.

‘ *Au nom du Peuple Français.*

‘ Nous, Consul-Général de France en Angleterre, Prions les Officiers Civiles et Militaires de laisser passer,’ &c. Here truly is a falling off—in place of

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\* Recent events lead to the hope that passports will ere long be entirely abolished in France. Already some of the severe restrictions imposed by them have been abrogated.







an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at the court of her Britannic majesty, praying the authorities of France, and, be it observed, of all nations friendly or allied to France, to afford the traveller free liberty of locomotion—we have an obscure consul, whose name is unknown, and signature undecipherable, taking upon himself, in the name of the French people, to ask for freedom of passage for the traveller. And for this precious document a fee of five shillings is exacted. The French people,—who are they?—what are they? An undivided, indivisible fraternal unity. Their numerous parties contradict this; and I must say that I should be very sorry to depend for protection on the Montagnards. I had the curiosity to ask the clerk at the consulate office in the city, how many passports were issued weekly. His reply was, that they averaged, during *la belle saison*, three hundred. This number, at the rate of five shillings each, makes the very respectable sum of £75 per week—a *belle saison*, truly, for the consul; but probably he is not permitted to pocket all these little fees. Doubtless, seeing how slenderly the ambassador is paid, in comparison to ours in France, the greater proportion of the above sum goes into the coffers of the Republic, so that the English traveller may have the honour and glory of contributing to teach freedom to the French.

Having procured and paid for my passport, I felt at liberty to commence my travels; and on the 1st of August, 1849, (I have great faith in odd numbers)

I set forth, accompanied by a friend, who was my companion throughout the tour.

I was going to say that we passed out of our Father-land along the well-worn and easy bars of the South-Eastern Railway, but when I remember the insufferable hardness and ruggedness of those wooden seats in the second-class carriages on that railway, I retract the word *easy*, and beg to substitute for it the more appropriate term, *agonizing*. Some wag who evidently possesses much hemispherical feeling, declared that the aforesaid seats changed their consistency and outward form, as hours passed over the head of the unfortunate traveller. Thus he not infelicitously figured the seats during a journey:

First ten miles	
Second do.	
Fourth do.	
Eighth do.	

and I would ask any man of feeling, not hippopotamusly thick-skinned, who has travelled in a second-class railway carriage in England, whether there is not some such difference between the first ten miles and those bordering on the hundredth.

It is evident that railway directors never travel in second-class carriages,—for if they did, it is quite certain that some portion of the many millions of money squandered by them, on ornamenting viaducts and

other ducts, in wild districts, would have been expended in cushioning the second-class carriages. Not in the profusely luxurious stuffy manner of the first-class seats, where a man in summer is bolstered up like a patient in the last stage of chalky gout, but comfortably padded. The extraneous parings from the first-class would be sufficient to effect this. If the endeavour to obtain an Act of Parliament to permit railway directors to raise the fares ten per cent. succeeds—which I very heartily hope may not be the case—I trust that our sapient legislators will insist on a proviso, that the second-class railway carriages shall be cushioned. If we could only compel a few of the angularly-built M. P.'s to travel in these carriages, the boon would assuredly be accorded to the public. Our uncomfortableness and grumbling were in some manner dissipated when we arrived near Folkestone, by finding that we and our baggage were to be slid down an inclined plane, and almost shot on board the Boulogne packet. This, it must be confessed, is a very great improvement over the old omnibus and cart method, which was in vogue last year: your body going in the omnibus, and your soul in the cart with your portmanteau, which you were assured you would find on board.

How the carriages descend that inclined plane is no mystery, natural laws explain the circumstance most satisfactorily; but how the engine, with all its iron strength, muscles, and sinews, does such successful battle against the gradient, when ascending it, is

a marvel. But that it does so is certain, and with a fair degree of speed, too.

Over the passage across the channel we shall throw, as night did, a veil of darkness. On landing at Boulogne we passed our bodies through the swarm of Hotel touters, and our portmanteaus through the Custom House, and retiring to a quiet room in our usual resort, the Hôtel des Bains, wondered at being in France, having left London in the afternoon, and pitied our fathers, who considered it expeditious travelling when they effected such a journey in two long days.

The following morning dawned auspiciously for the commencement of our travels. Strolling along the quay before breakfast, I was amused on witnessing the sale by auction of congeries of huge conger eels, several hundreds of which were twisting and twining in Medusa hair fashion. The auctioneer was a sturdy fishwife, who, with stentorian voice, lauded the quality of the sea serpents. At ten we started for Paris, and having tender remembrances of our second-class railway carriage seats, we duly appreciated the comfort of the same class carriage seats on this line. Not only, as many of my readers know, are they cushioned, but their dimensions, and the space between the seats, are much greater than in our wooden boxes. That there may be no doubt about the matter, here are the respective measurements:

Breadth of English seat in S. E. R.	. . .	13 inches
Do of French seat	. . . . .	21 inches
Distance between the seats	{ in English carriages	10 inches
	{ in French do	17 do.

And for this additional comfort you have to pay not more, but considerably less than is exacted in England for equal distances. The fare from London to Folkestone, 82 miles, hard plank seats, is 17 francs and 64 cents. The fare from Boulogne to Paris, 163 miles, or double the distance, is only 21 francs, cushions included.

The journey to Paris this year presented very different aspects to those visible when I last visited that city. Impelled by an ardent, though, perhaps, rash curiosity, I went there in July 1848, immediately after the June insurrection. At all the stations along the line the greatest excitement prevailed. At Amiens, the embarcadère was occupied by two regiments under arms, awaiting orders to start at a moment's notice for Paris. Pour passer le temps,—the fine military bands were playing lively airs, which echoed through the vast area, and the gay and pretty Vivandières were administering consolation in the form of *petit verres* to the troops. Now, as we drew near Paris, I was much surprised to find the stations, which had been burnt at that stormy period, yet in ruins. Are they allowed to remain so in order that they may remind travellers of what has been?

When the fortifications which enfold the French capital within their fraternal embrace are passed, and the railway terminus is approached, the traveller naturally felicitates himself on his arrival at Paris. But his hopes outrun realities; a weary half hour, at least, intervenes between him and his hotel. The Octroi,

that metropolitan monument of liberty, has to be passed. You may have a 'Jesuite au feu d'enfer'\* in your carpet bag, a sucking-pig, or tin canisters filled with wine in your portmanteau. In short, there is no knowing what you may have, or may not have, and so among your coats and linen they search for edibles.

At length, however, you are permitted to depart with your harmless portmanteau, or carpet bag, and calling out for Meurice's one-horse omnibus, you are rattled over interminable stones, which, from their unevenness, you imagine have not settled down since they were impressed into barricade service, and finally reach that celebrated hotel. All this happened to us, as it has, very probably, to the reader. It is the especial privilege of men who travel *en garçon*, to be located in rooms occupying the most elevated position in hotels. On this occasion, we were quartered in small, but very comfortable apartments, at the top of the house, from the balconies of which we looked over the vast and ponderous Tuileries and their gardens, alive as ever with groups of *bonnes* and lounging idlers.

At night, a resplendent moon poured a flood of

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\* Gastronomers who frequent Paris for eating purposes well know the meaning of this term. But readers who have souls above such sensual considerations will require to be told that the importation of turkeys into France being attributed to the Jesuits by men of erudition, the word 'Jesuite' in several provinces still signifies a turkey.

silver light over the palace home of France's last king,  
whose reverses prompted the question whether,

—— her silver beams,  
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage thatch  
Than on the dome of kings ?

And the answer by the same poet naturally followed,—

Nature rejects the monarch, not the man ;  
The subject, not the citizen : for kings  
And subjects—mutual foes—too often play  
A losing game into each other's hands.

Indeed, it was strange to look on that huge building, the scene of so many stirring events, and think of the weak old man, its last occupier, who a few months ago was hedged around with all the pomp and circumstance of royalty, now occupying humble rooms in a small watering-town in England, and tottering along the sea-beach.

Rousseau said of Paris, ' that all the time he was in it, he was only trying how he should leave it.' And Hazlitt, who visited it in 1826, describes it as ' a beast of a city to be in, to those who cannot get out of it.' But great have been the improvements connected with that metropolis since Hazlitt's time, and among them, none conducing more to the traveller's comfort than the establishment of railways, which enable him to leave the city at most cardinal points of the compass, when a fit of locomotion is on him, without the necessity of securing a place, a week in advance, in a dislocating diligence.

Now, having been pent up in our Babylon the greater during many months, we had every inclination to avail ourselves immediately of these fiery-footed steeds to convey us to lands where we might quaff

A beaker full of the warm south.

But we were tempted to pause for a few days to see two sights, which are not included in the list of permanent Paris lions. These were the great exhibition of modern pictures, or Salon de 1849, as it is called; and the Quinquennial Exposition of Arts and Manufactures.

It is one of the golden rules of republicanism to make everything national useful to the commonwealth, and everything useful, national. Thus when the Palais des Tuileries was proclaimed 'Propriété Nationale,' its vast halls were turned into hospital wards, and when the wounded of the June insurrection were either cured, or, by dying, ceased to burden the Republic, and the Tuileries became again disposable to national uses, it was determined to appropriate it to the exhibition of modern pictures. This certainly was wise, for it was nothing short of an insult to mask the old paintings in the Louvre with the performances of young France; and by the move the public were admitted to a second exhibition—the home of their late king, and that of their darling Napoleon. The 'Salon' was thrown open to the public every day in the week but Friday, on which day one franc was charged for admission. As



communism formed no part of our political creed, we determined to go on the select day. On paying our money we were presented with a yellow piece of paper, bearing the words—'Salon de 1849—Palais des Tuileries. Billet de circulation pour les jours réservés,' and we passed up l'Escalier d'honneur, and into the far-famed apartments of the Tuileries. And here, at the very threshold, we were saluted by living images of liberty, in the shape of flocks of swallows, that flitted to-and-fro through the vast halls and galleries, evidently entirely at their ease, their nests forming stucco-like ornaments to the cornices.

The reader may remember that at the Salon of 1848, the Direction des Beaux Arts resolved that every picture sent for exhibition should be exhibited. It was thought desirable to act on the motto of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, by permitting the veriest dauber to exhibit his performances as well as a Vernet, leaving the new sovereign of Paris and France—the immaculate people—to judge of the merits of the pictures. The result was, that 4599 paintings and 335 pieces of sculpture were sent in. Public opinion was not tardy in passing judgment on these performances.

More than two-thirds were condemned as utterly contemptible—unworthy the name of paintings. We are told that in the exercise of their new privileges, and of that ready wit for which the Parisians are celebrated, stinging criticisms were attached to

the paintings and sculptures most remarkable for their grotesqueness and eccentricity. On a nondescript figure—'aux graveurs artistes, la patrie reconnaissante.' On a portrait of a hirsute gentleman, 'l'homme est l'animal qui ressemble le plus au singe.' On a verdant landscape, 'pâturage par un peintre en herbe,' &c. Such, in short, was the storm of laughter and ridicule raised against these villanous productions, that their owners removed them under the cover of night, glad to escape from universal derision.

So severe a lesson has not been bestowed entirely in vain. This year (1849), the number of paintings exhibited is 2586, being 2013 less than those of the preceding year. But let it not be imagined that they are master-pieces. Had we not heard of the infamous celebrity of the Salon of 1848, we should have thought nothing could have been worse than the collection of daubs plastered in mosaic-coloured confusion on the walls. Vice, it is said, to be hated, 'needs but to be seen,' and the same rule surely holds good with respect to *bad* pictures. It was melancholy to reflect on the enormous amount of labour bestowed on the acres of canvass in the present exhibition. The religious and historical paintings abounded with morbid sentimentality. A M. Coutel, in a picture entitled in the catalogue, 'Calvaire,' has introduced a pugilistic encounter between two soldiers at the foot of the cross, one of whom is clad in a tight-fitting coat of

flaming orange. Magdalens swarm, whose models must have been ballet girls; legions of angels, cherubs, demons, and all the accessories of the Roman-catholic church, are to be seen in every possible sprawling attitude, to the admiration, probably, of the ignorant, who, as Sir Walter Scott truly said, ever prefer exertion and agility to grace, but on which the educated gaze with feelings of profound pity and disgust. Historical subjects are similarly treated. We have the calamitous death of the late Archbishop of Paris under half a hundred different representations. Attired in his purple prelatical robes, he expires like a dolphin, exhibiting all the hues of the rainbow. His vestments are dappled with blood—in some instances you would think that the green tinge of corruption appeared through them. Then he appears surrounded by maids—ballet girls again—who strew flowers on his bier; then, by poissardes, with brawny arms and dishevelled locks, who kneel for his dying blessing. The result of all these contradictory paintings being, that the stranger can form no idea whatever of the attendant circumstances under which the good priest died.

The imaginative pictures are, if possible, even lower in character; for here the painter, being at liberty to exercise his own ingenious devices, has done so to the utter defiance of propriety. Not unhappily has it been said, if Nature were a French courtesan, the poetry and painting of France would be the finest in the world. Wherever we turned we were met by

illustrations of the truth of this remark. The portraits were not only wretched paintings, but conceived in the worst possible taste. The only exception was that of Cavaignac, by Vernet, and this, unfortunately, was not a striking likeness. We traversed room after room, hoping to the end that some oasis might appear amidst the desert: but in vain; and we sat down weary and exhausted, after having gone through twenty huge apartments. Then national feelings of pride found quick expression, and we thought of our own modest-sized exhibition, with its Turners, its Linnells, its Stanfields, Grants, Creswicks, &c. &c., and we exclaimed, what is to be seen here that can be compared for a moment with the works of those artists? It would be very unfair, however, to judge the respective merits of the two national exhibitions as a whole, as long as the French admit all classes of pictures, and the English academicians select only the best out of a multitudinous heap. And it would, perhaps, be a profitable lesson to our artists, and instructive to the public, if on one occasion every painting sent in were exhibited. The sculptures which we visited differed but little in mediocrity and bad taste from the paintings. There were numerous groups in every possible and impossible attitude, realizing the stigma applied to French sculptors, that they would if they could

Make the Apollo dance.

The apartments, which to the stranger are an exhibition in themselves, have a faded, dingy appearance,

and bear the marks of the rough treatment they received during their occupancy by the mob after the late outbreak. Scarcely an article of furniture remains; and, remembering its fate, I was surprised to see the large silver statue, emblematic of Peace, which had been presented by the city of Paris to Napoleon in 1807, and which gives its name to the saloon in which it is placed, still resting on its pedestal. Republican principles suggest that it would have been proper to have sent it into the world in the form of broad pieces to do good—a destiny to which the silver Apostles, in a church at Naples, were obliged to submit under Bonaparte's rule.

The finest and most interesting apartment is that now called, 'Galerie de Diane,' but which was formerly styled the 'Salle des Ambassadeurs.' Here Louis XIV., seated on his gorgeous throne, received ambassadors; and here, in his cinnamon-coloured coat embroidered with diamonds, his wig powdered with gold dust, and his red-heeled shoes, the monarch moved, surrounded by his fawning courtiers, who, as history tells us, shaded their eyes from so dazzling a spectacle, until assured by the words—'Gentlemen, I, *too*, am mortal.' The immense hall scarcely sufficed to hold the troop of parasites that buzzed round their sensual master. 'Quand j'aurai de la peine aux Carmélites,' said the unhappy Louise, about to retire from these courtiers, 'je me souviendrai de ce que ces gens là m'ont fait souffrir;' and not only she, but thousands of unoffending human beings, who

were mowed down when the dreadful day of retribution arrived. This celebrated hall was used as a dining-room during the reign of Louis Philippe. The last apartment in the suite thrown open to the visitor is the 'Salon de Famille.' It was Louis XIV.'s sleeping-room, and has been used as such by every succeeding sovereign who has occupied the Tuileries. Here the late king slept the night before his miserable flight from his capital. The decorations are very quiet. The impression left on the mind after walking through these now dreary and deserted apartments partakes much of that experienced by contemplating the outside of the Tuileries—vastness and grandeur—but nothing of the elegant or beautiful.

The feelings of disappointment which the 'Salon' had created quickly evaporated when we visited the 'Exposition' of Arts and Manufactures. This is indeed a magnificent national undertaking, worthy a great nation.\*

With the view of endeavouring to restore confidence which the late revolution has so much shaken, manufacturers and tradesmen determined to make the Exposition of 1849 superior, if possible, in every respect

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\* These expositions had their origin under the Directory. The first lasted only three days. The second took place in 1801, on which occasion one solitary bronze medal was awarded. In 1802 the first piece of so-called French muslin was exhibited, which was pronounced, however, by the examining committee, to be of English manufacture. The succeeding expositions produced much higher developments.

to that which preceded it—and they succeeded. In 1844 there were 3960 exhibitors; the present Exposition boasts 4532. The articles exhibited are also more numerous, and of a better quality. Government granted 600,000 francs for the erection of a suitable building. This is divided into aisles, each being appropriated to different manufactures, the names of the towns producing them appearing inscribed on the roof. Many of the objects were of great beauty—the bronzes especially elegant. The products of Algiers occupied a large space. Every article of use or luxury was to be found in this huge bazaar. It is a wise regulation that no object is allowed to be sold—otherwise visitors would be tempted above the power of resistance. Crowds of people of all classes moved through the alleys—working-men in their blue blouses seemed, however, to form the majority. The most perfect order prevailed. Elegantly dressed ladies occupied seats at the entrances and exits, holding out velvet purses furnished with little bells, which rung in the cause of orphans.

It is worth noticing, that at this Exposition, in common with those that have preceded it, a very large majority of the prizes have been bestowed on manufacturers inhabiting the northern departments of France. Dupin, in his ‘*Forces Productives*,’ states, that at a recent exposition, 293 medals of gold, silver, or bronze, were awarded to parties living in the north of France, and only 107 to those in the

south. The records of 'brevets' granted from 1791 to 1825, show that 1699 were for inventions made by natives of the north of France, and only 413 for those made by southerns. But the great superiority of intellect of the north over the south, is evinced even more remarkably by the members of the Academy of Sciences,—forty-eight of whom were born in the 132 departments of the north of France, and only seventeen in the fifty-four departments of the south.

Great and stirring exertions are being made to 'get up' an Exhibition of Arts and Manufactures in London for 1851. In so eminently commercial a country as England such an exhibition ought to be, not only successful, but superior to all others of a similar nature. It is, I think, to be regretted that government will not supply the funds for a suitable building, by which means the exhibition would be truly national.

I was unwilling to leave Paris without re-visiting the scenes of the June insurrection. But scarcely a trace of that bloody period remained. The houses which I had seen tottering to their fall, riddled by cannon balls, had either been entirely rebuilt, or repaired; the human tide which, at that period, surged angrily to and fro through the narrow streets surrounding the Hotel de Ville, now glided along in peaceful tranquillity. Business, which was entirely suspended in the Faubourg St. Germain, now as-



sumed a stirring appearance. In short, if, by a stretch of fancy, the disfiguring, skeleton-like trees of liberty could be transformed into May-poles, nothing would remain to tell of the searing-iron which had passed over so large a portion of the city.

But although these outward signs of the past had disappeared, a few days' sojourn in Paris were amply sufficient to prove that the deeper evils occasioned by the late convulsion are far from being numbered among past events. An eminent French writer has said of his own countrymen,—‘*Nous sommes un peuple malheureux. Nous sommes nés pour les courtes joies et les longues douleurs. Rien ne nous réussit. Pour nous 93 est le lendemain de 89, Waterloo est au revers d’Austerlitz. Nos fautes dévorent sans cesse le fruit de nos grandes actions.*’

This is an honest avowal, and, as regards the overthrow, particularly truthful. For that event had for its ostensible purposes the happiness and liberty of the people; but these blessings have not followed it; and, on the other hand, the elements of national prosperity have been converted into discord and distrust. And the people are becoming daily more and more impatient at the state of affairs. The National Assembly, from which so much was expected, turns out after all to be no gold-laying goose, but a far more costly species of legislation than the old Chamber of Deputies. A widely-circulated popular Paris periodical, contrasting the two systems, ob-

serves:—‘Nous avions il y a un an, des députés qui ne nous coutaient rien. Nous avons à présent des représentants qui nous coutent fort cher,—et qu’on a baptisés récemment du nom de *vingt-cinq francs jouriens*, adjectif un peu long, mais significatif. Les députés nous coutaient simplement des ministères. Les représentants nous coutent chacun vingt-cinq francs, c’est-a-dire, le valeur d’un *souverain* d’Angleterre attendu que chacun d’eux est le diminutif d’un souverain.’

So unhinged, indeed, are the political elements in France, that if a second Bonaparte were to arise, gifted with those amazing powers which awed men, and enabled that great spirit, by a coup-de-main, to assume the rank of head;—one, in short, who, as he, ‘sait tout faire, peut tout faire, et veut tout faire;’ the people, ever fond of change, would, in all human probability, flock round his standard, and swear ready allegiance. But the present chief of the Republic is not the man to do such things.

The French may truly be said to fabricate—

The sword that stabs their peace!

But although a dread of something undefinable and fearful pervades the minds of all classes, the usual levity of their character is as conspicuous as ever. When the nation breathed a little freer at the termination of that scene, probably unparalleled in darkness in the history of nations—the Reign of Terror—the French metropolis assumed an air of gaiety which could scarcely be credited, had we not veracious his-

torians who witnessed what they describe. Women clothed themselves in dresses of the flimsiest texture, and fashionable people gave what were called 'Bals des Victimes,' at which the relatives of the unfortunate wretches who perished by the guillotine were present, wearing their hair dressed as if in readiness to suffer decapitation.

Shortly after the June insurrection, when all the theatres and places of public amusement were closed, and the Parisians were reduced to the verge of despair for amusement, it was announced that a balloon would ascend from the Champs Elysées on a Sunday afternoon. I was in Paris at the time, and I verily believe that two-thirds of the population poured forth to witness the almost childish sight. It seemed as if the woes of the city were about to depart for ever with the aërial machine. The past was utterly forgotten in the excitement of the hour. Thus are they

Pleased with a feather, tickled with a straw.

But their levity was brought before me in even a more painful manner. While the streets were yet stained with blood, Victor Hugo harangued the National Assembly, urging the expediency of making immediate grants of money to the theatres to enable them to resume their performances. I was present during his address. The galleries of the Assembly were filled with actors and actresses; the latter occupying the front seats, and dressed in the height of fashion. The poet-orator was fortunate. While he

spoke, perfect silence prevailed. The subject was evidently of general interest. ‘The *salvation* of the country,’ he exclaimed, ‘depends on your theatres. Close them, and insurrections will continue. Open them, and peace and tranquillity will be restored.’ He argued rightly; it was, doubtless, good policy to draw disaffected people from low clubs and plotting places to the theatres. Napoleon himself had endeavoured to throw out a similar species of lure. When *la maravigliosa Angelica*, as Catalani was called, made her début in Paris, Bonaparte immediately saw, that if so powerful an attraction could be retained permanently in the metropolis, the thoughts of scheming revolutionists might be turned into less mischievous channels at the Opera than at the Jacobin clubs. He sent for Catalani. The singer appeared before the great conqueror with fear and trembling:—‘Madame, you must remain in Paris; you shall have a salary of one hundred thousand francs annually,—a vacation of two months,—and your talents will be duly appreciated.’ ‘Sire,’ replied Catalani, ‘I have accepted an engagement to sing in London.’ ‘Madame, it is decided that you remain in Paris;’ and Napoleon bowed her out of the room. The great singer was so awed by his presence that she had not the courage to tell him that, having contracted an engagement with the Ambassador of England at the court of Portugal, she could not honourably avoid appearing in London. She was obliged to leave the country in a small vessel, to the captain of which she

paid one hundred and fifty louis to convey her to England.

But to return to Victor Hugo and his speech. What hopes of solid happiness can be entertained for a country whose *salvation* is said to depend on its opera or theatres? And that the expression found ready and willing acceptance was evident, for the representatives present applauded to the echo. They did more, they voted large sums to the theatres. May not Rabelais' double etymology be still applied to the French metropolis? — Par-ris and Lutetia.

The farina of deep-dyed sentimental romance and folly borne on the wings of thousands of Feuilletons, which quickens even with blowing, doubtless greatly contributes to maintain this levity.

The number of newspapers published in Paris is perfectly astounding. They are screamed about the Boulevards and principal streets from morning to night. The prices are regulated to suit the means of the humblest mechanic. Some are given away. Here is the announcement of one:—‘Journal des Fiancées. Ce Journal est distribué le Lundi de chaque semaine aux principales familles qui marient leurs enfans.’ Political brochures are poured from obscure presses with marvellous rapidity, affording unquestionable evidence of the restless state of the times. The same thing happened in 1789. Arthur Young relates under the date of September in that year.—‘The business going forward at present in

the pamphlet shops of Paris is incredible. Every hour produces something new. 'Thirteen came out to-day, sixteen yesterday, and ninety-two last week.'

It is pleasing to see amidst all this political chaos that the city is yearly undergoing improvements. Hopes are entertained that before long the Louvre will be completed. It ought to be finished, to make the concatenation of original ideas inviolable and complete. A striking instance of the attention paid to science and art by the French government, be it republican or monarchical, is presented by the exhibition of antiquities from Nineveh, to which a room in the sculpture department of the Louvre has been appropriated. M. Botta has been more fortunate than Mr. Layard. His bulls are now to be seen in all their mystic majesty, whilst those exhumed by the enterprising Englishman are yet lying prostrate on the Busrah strand.

The old Custode drew especial attention to the lotus leaf surmounting the head-dress of the kings. He maintained stoutly that it was the fleur-de-lys, and that the Bourbons were descended from the Ninevites!

Paris is certainly a splendid city, compared to which, our metropolis is dreary and dusky—

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,  
says Keats. Public edifices of harmonious proportions—vast and grand, are especial joys to the denizen of large cities. How numerous are the buildings in Paris which afford pure delight to the spectator!

How comparatively few are they in London! With all our wealth, we fail to produce a real great work. Look at the New Houses of Parliament—but the reader will ask, from what point? Reasonably, too, for the entire river façade of that huge pile can only be seen in its comprehensiveness from the decks of penny steamboats.

In a climate like that of London, florid Gothic architecture is nearly as inappropriate as Chinese, and yet millions of pounds are expended in minute carvings and tracery, the details of which cannot be seen excepting by telescopic eyes. The architect must have had the comfort of sparrows much at heart when he designed those legions of kings and queens and bearded figures—lions, unicorns, and dressings (court dressings) of the windows, for to their uses will they be applied. In the folds of a ruff, in the gatherings of a mantle—nay, in the very face of majesty—for sparrows are impudent creatures—will the nests of these birds be made. The beautiful capitals of the Corinthian pilasters in Somerset House, where I reside, and on which I have the happiness of looking from my bed-room window, are alive before the breeding season with these birds; and long before they have constructed their nests, the leaves of the acanthus and the spiral volutes are eclipsed by bunches of hair and pendant straws.

Great architects have always held that buildings should be framed in the spirit of their purposes. The New Houses of Parliament are utterly meaningless;

they might have been built for the performance of gorgeous ballets, for a series of Puseyite chapels, for showy shops ; in fact, for anything rather than the solemn and grave deliberations of a great national legislative assembly. Remembering that for these purposes they were erected, it is lamentable to reflect how small a modicum of æsthetic perception they manifest.

But this is no fitting place to show how entirely the excellent architectural precept of Vitruvius—*Utilitas, firmitas, venustas*—has been disregarded in the erection of the greater part of our public buildings, and in none more than the New Houses of Parliament.



## CHAPTER II.

**T**OURISTS are not sufficiently sensible of their obligations to engineers, by whose clever contrivances they are enabled to skim like summer butterflies from pleasure to pleasure.

From Paris to Orleans was wont to be a tedious, dislocating kind of journey; now, thanks to a railway, it is an after-dinner affair. We dined at Veray's, —as the cathedral clock struck nine, we entered the court-yard of the Hôtel Orleans in the ancient city of La Pucelle. But the railway has failed to impart any of the life and movement of Paris to Orleans. It stagnates still in all its dull provinciality. True, our hotel quivered yet with the excitement which had been occasioned by the visit of Louis Napoleon a few days previously, who paraded the streets with a cavalcade of officers, on his way to open a new line of railway. Our landlady was, however, much more eloquent respecting a certain lady, whose beauty had turned the heads of half Orleans. The lady in question had preceded the President of the Republic, and engaged a set of rooms in the hotel commanding a view of the street. Attired in a '*parure superbe*,' she gazed eagerly on Louis Napoleon as he passed, and, like a fair lady of old, waved her scarf to the

gallant knight. She was, added the landlady, a countrywoman of yours; her name—but, dear reader, you cannot suppose that this will be divulged.

The principal and, indeed, only interest of Orleans lies in the past, the evidences of which are fast crumbling away. The zealous antiquary will find houses which bear high-sounding names, to which they may or may not be entitled. That called *Jeanne d'Arc* has certainly no pretensions to the honour of having sheltered the 'Maid,' for the chamber in which she reposed appertained to a building destroyed long ago. There is, however, an undoubted genuine relic of *La Pucelle* preserved in the private museum of *M. Vergniaud*. It is the banner that was carried in the procession to celebrate the raising of the siege of Orleans, and presented to the town by *Francis I.* The material is canvass, painted on both sides. On one side, the Virgin and Child are depicted in the centre; on her right appears *Charles VII.*, kneeling,—and on her left, the *Pucelle*, also kneeling, with her hands uplifted in the attitude of prayer. She is equipped in full armour, with the exception of her helmet, which is on the ground beside her. The expression of her face is remarkable, being characteristic of great energy and firmness. Her long dark hair sweeps down her back, being simply bound round by a fillet. On the other side of the banner is a curious view of ancient Orleans, showing the old bridge, which was the scene of brave deeds enacted by the *Pucelle*. The passage

and possession of that bridge formed the turning point of the fearfully contested day. The French captains urged prudence and delay. The Maid, impelled by the commanding voices of her celestial council, declared for immediate action. When it was decided that the bridge should be forced, Jacques Boucher, her host, entreated her to take some food before starting. 'Jeanne,' said he, 'mangeons cette alose avant que vous partiez.' 'En nom de Dieu,' was her reply, 'on n'en mangera jusqu'au souper, que nous repasserons par dessus le pont et ramenerons un *Goddam*, qui en mangera sa part.'\* And, true to her presentiment, the Maid returned in the evening over the bridge.

It is not creditable to the inhabitants of Orleans that no appropriate statue of their chiefest glory exists. The present bronze figure of the Maid, at one extremity of the Place du Martyre, is a vile affair. Its position warrants the conclusion that the citizens are ashamed of it. An admirable site for a statue is now furnished by the new street, Jeanne d'Arc, which is central and spacious. And for the statue itself, the sculptor could not err, if he moulded his marble or bronze into the image portrayed in the fine lines of Schiller:—

Ein Zeichen hat der Himmel mir verheissen;  
 Er sendet mir den Helm, er kommt von ihm,  
 Mit Götterkraft berühret mich sein Eisen  
 Und mich durchflammt der Muth der Cherubim;

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\* Mémoires concernant la Pucelle, (Collection, vol. viii. p. 173.)

In's Kriegs-gewühl hinein will es mich reißen,  
Es treibt mich fort mit Sturmes ungestüm;  
Den Feldruf hör' ich mächtig zu mir dringen,  
Das Schlachtross steigt und die Trompeten klingen.

A rush for four hours through a country which, from its tame and flat nature, gave no encouragement to slower travelling, brought us to Bourges. The city cannot be discerned from the railway station, although it is situated on high ground. We were conveyed in a very shaky and infirm omnibus to our destination, the Hôtel du Bœuf Couronné. Ere we had threaded half a dozen of the crooked streets, we were quite willing to admit that Bourges is one of the most ancient and worst built cities in France, a character which Malte Brun insists on as being due to it. As our crazy vehicle went rumbling on its labyrinthine way, it really appeared marvellous that we did not pitch into some wide-mouthed shop. The inhabitants stood in the streets with open mouths, staring at our erratic movements, speculating, doubtless, on the motley freight of passengers. At length, after numberless ups and downs, twinings and twirlings, we were deposited in the yard of our hostel. It was difficult to conceive that the driver had not made a mistake, so unlike was the building to an inn. But the heavy old sign, bearing a bloated ox, crowned right regally, testified to the character of the quaint mansion. Few signs of life animated it. No bustling landlord or fidgetty landlady appeared at the door; no officious garçons came running forth. We stood

beside our luggage, wondering whether we should have to carry it to our apartments, or whether any apartments were to be had. At length a girl issued from the cuisine. To our request to be shown sleeping-rooms, she led us down the long court-yard, at the extremity of which was a doorway: through this we followed her; to the right, on a level with the ground, was a large cobwebbed chamber, with a dark-looking little bed in one corner, standing on long shanks of legs, a couple of heavy and massive chairs, a table, and a secretaire, completed the furniture of the room; there was an apartment of similar size, similarly furnished, overhead—these were our lodgings. A pressing request led the fille to exchange slop-basins for others of larger proportions, which came in piping hot from kitchen service; and we further succeeded in inducing her to bestow on us the luxury of two clean towels. I have described our sleeping accommodations thus minutely, that the reader may form an idea of the hotel luxuries to be met with at Bourges—begging that he will bear in mind that we were at the principal hotel. But there is a charm in that old building, or buildings, rather, for there are several houses surrounding the court-yard; and it was pleasant to hear, that through many centuries and many changes, the ‘*Bœuf Couronné*’ had opened its doors to wayfarers under the master-ship of many generations of landlords.

The broad glare of an unclouded day was mellowing into eve as we left our inn and ascended the

narrow Rue Bourbonnoux, on our way to the Cathedral. This glorious fane stands, as it should do, on the most elevated ground in Bourges, and is its great ornament. Few temples reared to the majesty of an Almighty Being are finer than that of St. Etienne. It is a marvellous edifice. For the souls of master-minds can be read on the stones, which are wrought into forms of extraordinary beauty, yet moulded into one harmonious whole. The architecture is pointed florid Gothic,—the most appropriate for a cathedral dedicated to Roman Catholic worship.

The façade presents five huge deeply-recessed portals, studded with innumerable statues and carvings. Entering, the eye is awed by the majestic grandeur of the lofty nave, with its four aisles, supported by a forest of pillars. Moving onwards, delight succeeds, as the chapels round the choir are seen with their windows blazing with many-coloured lights. It might seem that kings and princes in the olden time, whose bodies are now dust in the vast crypts beneath, had plucked the jewels from their diadems in moments of religious zeal, and set them in the glowing windows.

The sloping sunbeams, streaming through the rich mosaic, paved the cathedral floor with brilliant hues. Then pealed the organ, for it was the hour of vespers; and as the dulcet sounds rose and fell through the vast expanse, the elaborate tracing and carving glimmered

In the soft chequerings of a sleepy light.

The citizens of Bourges have, indeed, good cause to be proud of their cathedral.

They dreamt not of a perishable home  
Who thus could build ——

And yet the spirit of beauty which predominates throughout had not power to awe the hand of the spoiler. During the revolution of 1792, the entire fabric narrowly escaped destruction. The portals, with their rich imagery, were terribly mutilated; and it was only because the power to destroy could not keep pace with the desire, that the building escaped: it has lately undergone a thorough restoration.

Close to the cathedral stands the Archbishop's palace, a fine edifice, seeing that his Grace takes very high rank in the church, having for his suffragans a large number of bishops. The see was founded as early as the year 252. St. Ursin, the first archbishop, took the title and rank of patriarch and primate of the provinces of Aquitaine.

A delicious public garden partly surrounds the palace. Through a fine avenue of linden trees the towers of the cathedral appear in their gray tinted beauty.

At one extremity of the avenue, a fragment of the old walls of the town, in geological parlance, crops out. The extraordinary thickness of these defences renders it comparatively easy to understand the difficulty which Cæsar met with in capturing the city. We are told that, during the struggle against

the Romans at the close of Cæsar's proconsulship, the territory of the Bituriges became the seat of war. As the conqueror and his army approached, upwards of twenty towns were burnt by the inhabitants. A general council was held, to consider whether Avericum, the Latinized name of Bourges, should be burnt or defended. Its defence was eventually resolved on. Cæsar forthwith commenced operations for besieging the place. The terrible Roman machines for battering and undermining the walls were set in motion. The walls were constructed of alternate layers of wooden beams and stone, so as to form a secure defence—the stone preventing them being consumed by fire, and the wooden beams deadening the shock of the battering-ram. The skill and energy of the Romans, however, at last prevailed, and after about a month's continuous siege, the city fell before the conqueror. The Romans had been so exasperated by the massacre of some of their countrymen at Genabum (Orleans), and by the toilsome nature of the siege, that they wreaked a deadly vengeance on the unfortunate inhabitants, sparing neither age nor sex. Out of 40,000 persons who had been confined in the city, only 800 escaped.

It is no slight evidence of the energy of man, that this depopulated town recovered such a blow. It rose again to considerable importance. According to Malte Brun, Augustus made it the capital of



Aquitania, and it was further improved and fortified by the Romans.

In the early ages of the French monarchy, Bourges suffered greatly from war, and it became the scene of much persecution during the civil conflicts in the sixteenth century. Indeed, there is no town in France possessing a more chequered or bloody history than attaches to Bourges—and it is more wonderful that it exists at all, than that we see it a strange contorted labyrinthine kind of place. Its inhabitants, never daunted, seem to have set about rebuilding their battered city as soon as the conflict had passed,—solidly, too, if there be truth in the saying that—

Bourges, Autun, Le Mans, et Limouges,  
Furent jadis les quatre villes rouges,

alluding to the general use of red brick in the edifices.

We supped with a motley set at the table d'hôte of the Bœuf Couronné. The conversation ran hot and strong upon, and against, the republic, which, among a large party, had not a single defender.

If our hotel was silent and dull during the day, it certainly was the very reverse in the night; but I cannot say that the noises were the most agreeable in the world. We had not been in bed an hour before being made sensible that we were in the midst of a formidable colony of rats: the nimble-footed vermin, like true imps of darkness as they are, carried on

their nocturnal revels with amazing and never-tiring vigour behind the panneled lining of our walls. Their name must have been legion. I thought of Curran, who declared, on the occasion of his passing a night in a bed tenanted by myriads of fleas, that had they only been unanimous in their movements, they would infallibly have had sufficient strength to have dragged him from his couch. And substituting eating for dragging, it seemed to me that the rats around my room were sufficiently numerous to pick my bones clean, had they boldly ventured out *en masse* to the attack. Occasionally, after a squeak behind the panel, I heard one scampering across the room. Then I hurled a boot in the direction whence the noise proceeded, and all was still as death. But I had committed no slaughter; for soon the long-whiskered gentry recommenced their orgies with renewed vigour—evidently led on by some hoary-coated rascal, who had been long on the stage—I felt as a Gulliver among them. But what will not a tired traveller endure! Ere long I became accustomed to my noisy companions, and went to sleep with their scratchings and gnawings in my ears.

The bright beams of morning streamed into my room through the network of a clustering vine which mantled the window. Large bunches of grapes were fast assuming the deep purple hue of maturity, affording evidence that we were already in the land of Bacchus, though the sacrifices offered up to the rosy

god are, it must be admitted, not of the most potent nature.

Unmutilated by the rats, who had slunk into their holes, I dressed and sallied forth on an exploring expedition. And first I went to the celebrated Hôtel de Ville, formerly the private mansion of Jacques Cœur, a perfect Rothschild in his time, who, forgetting the wholesome precept, 'Put not your trust in Princes,' enriched his master, Charles VII., and was repaid by long imprisonment, and banishment from his native city.

The house of this millionaire, like the life of its master, is a species of mystery. It is in the richest and most beautiful style of florid Gothic, and consists of a multitude of courts and turrets, chambers and galleries, winding stairs and narrow dungeons. An especial charm lies in the nature of its construction, no two portions being alike; indeed, Jacques seems to have been as fond of variety in his habitation as the great king Ahasuerus, who reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, and whose palace was so gorgeous, and replete with varied furniture, that even 'his drinking vessels were diverse one from another.' Unhappily, the uses to which Jacques Cœur's mansion has been put, as Hôtel de Ville, have caused much destruction and alteration of its internal arrangements. There is, however, ample evidence left to show, that Jacques was a man of wonderfully refined taste, though mixed up, withal, with a certain

dash of pleasant quaintness. His motto, which meets the eye in various positions, reflects the man—

A VAILLANTS



RIEN IMPOSSIBLE.

The chapel,—for Jacques, like all good and great men, was not unmindful of the duty and worship due to his Creator,—is a perfect gem, abounding in sculptures, carvings, paintings, and religious devices, which would rejoice the eye of a Puseyite. The enormous wealth of Jacques Cœur, which was amassed in his callings of merchant and jeweller, caused the ignorant and envious of his times to regard him as possessing the secret of the Philosopher's Stone. This belief was strengthened by the number of singular emblems and devices pervading his house. In one place, he is yet to be seen mounted on a mule, shod with shoes reversed. This singularity may, perhaps, be explained by his desire to commemorate a successful *ruse*, the tracks of his mule leading pursuers to the inference, that the animal had travelled the opposite direction from that which it really had gone. Robbers' horses have sometimes been shod in a similar manner.

The real fact is, that Jacques was too wealthy and successful to remain unmolested by numerous enemies. He was accused of adulterating the coinage—a strange charge to bring against a man who was thought to possess the power of transmutation.

Charles VII. consented to appoint a special commission, to try his benefactor for the crimes alleged against him. The commissioners themselves were Jacques Cœur's principal foes. He refuted triumphantly all the charges brought against him. The fearful ordeal of torture was then threatened. The accused was introduced into the chamber of horrors. At the sight of the terrible apparatus his courage forsook him. In the anguish of his soul he pronounced his guilt. His enemies triumphed. Poor Jacques was condemned to death, a sentence which the king commuted to perpetual banishment, on the understanding that two hundred thousand crowns should be paid to him from the confiscated property of the ruined merchant. The remainder of Jacques Cœur's life is full of interest and strange romance, which learned men have endeavoured to make clear. Voltaire says that, on being banished from France, the exile established himself in the island of Cyprus, where he carried on mercantile transactions, and amassed a second large fortune. Thevet adds to this story, that he married, and had two daughters; but Bonamy, in an elaborate paper on his life, (read before the *Académie des Inscriptions*,) shows these relations to be fabulous.

It is, however, certain that Jacques Cœur's misfortunes did not impair his wonderful energy, for we find him taking an active part in the war of Pope Calixtus III. against the Turks. The Pope gave him

the command of a portion of his fleet. Cœur embarked, but, falling sick, stopped at Chios, where he died in 1461, and was buried in the church of the Cordeliers in that island.

It is not my intention to attempt a description of the numerous interesting buildings in Bourges ; but before leading the reader out of the quaint old city, I must take him into the convent of the Sœurs Bleues, and make him a confidant of a tête-à-tête which I enjoyed with a fair Sister in that establishment.

The convent in question is remarkable for the extreme elegance of its construction. It was formerly known as the Hôtel Allemand, deriving its title from a family of that name. It was built in the early part of the sixteenth century, and is a beautiful specimen of the Renaissance style. Its elegance, however, is completely veiled from the street by a high dead wall, along which a traveller might pass a hundred times, and remain in utter ignorance of the gem which it conceals. Indeed, I had some difficulty in finding the door, for the long, winding street of Les Vieilles Prisons, in which the convent is situated, abounds in dead walls and narrow wickets, similar to those attached to the convent. At length I hit the mark ; and, ringing a bell, entrance was afforded me by one of the sisterhood, who requested me to walk in. A few steps brought me within a court, surrounded on three sides by the now convent walls. The transition from the present to the past was most striking. The

poetry of architecture pervaded the scene. Elegant tourelles, frosted over by exquisite tracery, rose before me; the façade presented a multitude of ornaments, the outpourings of the rich imagination of the sculptor; oriel-windows, winding stairs half-covered by clustering vines, the elegance of which was successfully rivalled by the stone imitations; statuettes wonderfully perfect—in short, all the beauties of the Renaissance style of architecture were here in copious profusion.

‘This is very beautiful,’ I observed to the Sœur who stood beside me. She was young—handsome, too—though her dress was not calculated to enhance her personal beauties. It consisted of a coarse black stuff robe, with blue sleeves, a hood concealing the greater portion of the head, worsted stockings, and heavy, unfeminine shoes. A large silver cross and rosary depended from her waist. ‘I am glad Monsieur thinks so,’ she replied, regarding me with her large blue eyes; then, suddenly depressing them, she desired to know whether I was ‘un bon Catholique.’ This was a staggering kind of question to put at the outset of my visit, and it seemed to me that further exploration of the convent would depend on the tenour of my reply. ‘I humbly trust,’ said I, ‘that I am not a very bad Catholique, but it is right to tell you that I do not profess the *Roman* Catholic religion—I am a Protestant.’ At this declaration the countenance of the nun became clouded, and I expected to be immediately turned into the street. My fears, however,

were groundless. ‘Ah,’ said she, sighing deeply, ‘how can you be a Protestant, for hors de la religion Catholique on ne peut pas être sauvé.’ ‘Hold,’ I replied, ‘if charity be part of your creed, how can you say who shall be saved?’ This, I trusted, would put a stop to our religious controversy; but I was mistaken. With all the zeal of a Jesuit, she commenced an attack upon my creed, beseeching me, if I valued eternal salvation, to abjure the Protestant faith, and to then and there embrace the true religion. Heaven forgive me if, as her eloquence and enthusiasm lighted up her fine features, I thought more at the moment of this world and of its pleasures. The place seemed made for love. Those bowers, redolent of flowery perfumes, were never intended to echo the melancholy voice of cloistered nuns; and as she led me from chamber to chamber, and stood at the threshold of the miniature chapel,—a very gem of architecture,—

dulcet music swell’d,

Concordant with the life-strings of the soul:

It throb’d in sweet and languid beatings there.

‘My sisters,’ said my fair guide, ‘are playing the organ.’ ‘It is very sweet,’ I replied; ‘and with such an abode as this, such music, such sisters, life must be happiness.’ ‘Alas! not entirely so; we have our sorrows here. But we endeavour to live, not for this world, but to merit a better one.’ I had touched another chord. ‘Then you do not love the world?’ ‘No, indeed, for it is full of deceit.’



Was I conversing with an Eloisa? Was the fair being before me the prey of disappointed love? Had she, like her predecessor, passed through the agonies of blighted affections, and

trembled, wept, and pray'd,  
Love's victim once, though now a sainted maid?

That countenance, those full beaming eyes, themselves love and light, were assuredly not originally destined to remain throughout youth unmoved by affection. And so young still; and all those womanly feelings were chilled and dead. For ever? Yes; vows had been taken—solemn vows which may not be broken; an impassable barrier interposed between her and the world. Therefore did she cling to the fascinations of the Roman Catholic religion, which consoled her in her loneliness.

I sat down on a stone seat in the court, for the purpose of sketching one of the fairy-like tourelles. The nun sat beside me. I spoke of the bright cheerful world without—of its pleasures, its joys: of which, without being bound up by religious vows, the true Christian might lawfully partake. She recurred to her favourite theme—the transcendent excellence of the Roman Catholic church. Then I praised the surrounding architecture, admired the loveliness of the trim flower-garden—a mosaic of bright hues. The nun heeded me not, but at each pause ever pressed her point. To win my soul to her creed, was evidently of far greater importance to her than my admiration of the

building. I fear that she found me a stubborn listener; but she endeavoured to do her spiriting so gently, that I did not feel displeased, though she was in sober earnest. Altogether it was a most curious interview, terminating, on my part, by my requesting her to accept a small donation for the tronc des pauvres, and trusting that, widely as we should in all probability be separated in this world, we might meet in that to come,

Where friends and lovers meet to part no more,  
Reaching the haven of perpetual peace.

The nun greatly disliked the appellation of *Sœurs Bleues*. ‘It is true,’ said she, ‘that they call us so; but this is on account of our blue sleeves. Our proper title is, ‘*La Société de la Sainte Famille*.’ The head establishment of this order is at Briançon. The society numbers six hundred members. Here the nuns employ a considerable portion of their spare time in instructing the children of poor parents, a large room in the convent having been set apart for that purpose.

There are other architectural gems at Bourges, the examination of which well repays the traveller. The finest mansions are grouped around the Cathedral: these are yet occupied by wealthy citizens, who seem perfectly content to spend their days in the antique old city, and sigh not for the vanities of Paris, accompanied, as they are, by periodical revolutions. Among the beauties of Bourges, I

must not leave unchronicled the fair sex. We were much struck by the almost universal grace and beauty of the girls and women. Nor are they insensible of it. Standing one evening near a group of Hebes, who, I confess, divided my attention with the Maison de Cujas, and were, I think, more worthy of it, one of the girls was accosted by a youth with the words ‘Oh, Pauline, comme vous êtes belle aujourd’hui!’ ‘Mais, comme toujours,’ was the reply, which, it must be granted, betrays a frankness on the part of the fair maiden worthy of imitation. It is this wealth of female loveliness which doubtless caused one of the principal thoroughfares in Bourges to be called Rue du Dieu d’Amour, for where beautiful women abound, there will the little ubiquitous god be especially found.

But we could not dally amidst such sweets; we were but passing pilgrims, and the time had arrived for our departure. We summoned the landlord of the Bœuf Couronné to our council, and prayed him to advise us concerning the best mode of travelling to Auvergne. His information respecting diligences was most scanty, amounting simply to the fact, that no conveyance ran direct between Bourges and Clermont, but that he believed we should find a diligence at Nérondes, which would take us to the desired destination. Nérondes is, or was, in August, 1849, the terminus of the railway which it is proposed to construct between Orleans and Lyons. It is only a few miles to the east of Bourges. Our landlord

counselled us to proceed to Nérondes by an early morning train, holding out the pleasant expectation that we should arrive at Clermont in the evening of the same day. So we left the old town of Bourges after breakfast, and were deposited at Nérondes in the course of an hour. Our hopes of seeing a crowd of diligences bound for various towns in the centre and south of France were quickly dissipated, for the place was solitary, not a vehicle of any kind being within sight. A wooden shed, inscribed 'Bureau des Diligences,' stood near the station. There, at all events, we could glean some more precise information than our host at Bourges possessed. The affair was presided over by a demoiselle, who told us that there would be no diligence to Clermont before eleven o'clock at night, and that we could be forwarded only on the condition of there being vacant places, the said diligence travelling from Paris on the railway. This was vexatious intelligence. For here we were, at a miserable little town, containing no earthly or unearthly object of interest, with twelve mortal hours before us, to be spent we knew not how, and with the uncomfortable idea that, after all, we might not obtain seats in the diligence. We thought of Bourges, for there the day could have been spent pleasantly and profitably. However, there was nothing for us but to make the best of it; and leaving our luggage in the bureau, we walked along the dusty road to Nérondes, about half a mile from the station. Its one dirty, dreary street contrasted vilely with Bourges.

We entered the principal inn. The salon was redolent of stale tobacco smoke, and peopled with clouds of buzzing flies. Our inquiries respecting a dinner elicited the information that there would be a table d'hôte, on the arrival of two diligences from Paris, at five o'clock. At this we expressed our determination to dine; and after drinking some wine and water, we went out in quest of the church. This happily proved to be a building of far greater pretensions to the picturesque than we dared hope for. Sketching it, would be work for some hours; and so long and steadily did we apply ourselves to the task, that I verily believe there is not a stone of the edifice, nor a lichen of the many hues with which it was coloured, that are not daguerréotyped on our memories. But with all our affection for the church, we could not magnify it into a cathedral, and our labour came to a termination with yet a large gap between us and the table d'hôte.

The surrounding flat country presented no inducement for a ramble, so I took repose in the poetic groves of Shelley, and was deep in Queen Mab when the hour of five was struck by the church clock. Shortly afterwards the expected diligences rolled into the town, stopped before the Poste, and disgorged a marvellously numerous population out of their hot and stuffy insides. Amidst much bustle and great noise we dined, sitting opposite to the conducteurs of the two vehicles; who, from the enormous quantity of provisions which they consumed, afforded pretty

conclusive evidence of having a night's travel before them.

How we got over the long hours which intervened until eleven o'clock is even yet a mystery. About that time the train from Paris arrived, bringing with it sundry diligences divested of their wheels, among which was that bound for Clermont. Our hopes of proceeding in it, however, were but of very short duration, for it was full. This was disappointing enough, and the more so with the prospect of being obliged to remain at Néronde for the night, and perhaps for another day even. It was no small relief, therefore, to learn that we might have seats in the banquette of a diligence as far as Moulins; and as this town was in the direction, though not the shortest, towards Clermont, we at once engaged the seats, and after a sad waste of time in squabbling and talking respecting luggage, were driven out of the station-yard into the dark night, having a dreamy kind of notion that we might see Moulins by the morning's dawn. Arthur Young, who was no satin-cushion traveller, writes of French diligences more than sixty years ago — 'They are detestable. This is the first one that I have been in, and it shall be the last.' Without a single change, or attempt at amelioration, the French have been satisfied to use these lumbering, lying vehicles year after year, since the days when Young cast them off as hopeless for his travelling purposes, and took to his light gig. The rushing and inspiring locomotive has had no quickening effect

on administrators of vapourless locomotion. They still adhere to their sluggish pace, seldom exceeding five miles an hour.

We passed a wretched night in the banquette—on a seat harder than the hardest pig-skin saddle. The cold was excessive, and the scanty leather curtains wholly insufficient to exclude the night air. Our third in misery was a French merchant from the Havannah, who, dried up and half withered by the heat there, had come home, and was now on his way to the baths of Mont Dore. Enveloped in a huge Spanish cloak, he shrunk into his corner, nor stirred nor spoke during the journey.

Glorious, most glorious was the lighting up of the east as the sun burst from his chambers! The magnificent spectacle, not often seen by a Londoner, by the way, tended to make amends for the fatigues of the night; and as we rolled onwards, and Moulins came to view at the end of the characteristic poplar avenue, thoughts of Sterne's 'Maria' came across me. Far different to that gentle imaginary maiden were the stout-legged women trudging to the Moulins market. Their head-dress was a most extraordinary piece of straw architecture. In the 'Dictionnaire de Commerce,' published in 1723, we have, under the heading of 'Chapeau de Paille,' the following description:—'Espèce de chapeau fait de jonc ou de paille de seigle, dont les artisans et le menu peuple se servent en été. Il y en a aussi de fins, et d'une forme singulière que les femmes dans quelque provinces de

France portent au lieu de parasols, contre l'ardeur du soleil. Les uns et les autres sont en forme de tissus faits de ces légères matières diversement mises en couleur.' Here in 1849 were some of these singularly fantastic affairs, resembling a huge chandelier with outspread wings, bedizened with various bright-coloured ribbons. Women, through all ages, have loved to encase their heads in hats and bonnets of wondrous shapes. Montesquieu, in his '*Lettres Persanes*,' says, alluding to the head-dresses of his countrywomen—'Il a été un tems que leur hauteur immense mettoit le visage d'une femme au milieu d'elle même; dans un autre c'étoient les pieds qui occupoient cette place; les talons faisoient un piédestal qui les tenoit en l'air. Qui pourrait le croire?' We derived great amusement from these head-dresses, which are entirely confined to this part of France.

Our hopes of finding a diligence at Moulins, to convey us to Clermont, were doomed to disappointment. At the bureau we heard the same story, that all the public conveyances to Auvergne started from Paris, and therefore it was as problematical as ever whether the next diligence from Néronde would arrive with vacant places. The diligence in which we had travelled was bound to Vichy, and under the circumstances we were advised to share its fate and fortunes as far as St. Pourçain, which would take us another stage in the direction of Clermont. So to St. Pourçain we went, where, in the middle of its sole street, we were deposited with our luggage.



There was nothing inviting in the aspect of the place or its dirty and forbidding inn. We at once determined on progressing in some way or other, and even resolved to walk, if all other means of locomotion failed. Our Cuban friend was equally anxious to arrive at the end of his journey. After considerable difficulty, we contrived to disinter, from the dusty depths of a rambling *rémise*, a cabriolet, which the host was willing to hire for the purpose of conveying us to Clermont. It was a wretched vehicle, and must have seen its best days when the present century was in its teens. Nor was it without sundry testings and trials that it was allowed to depart on its perilous journey. The landlord mounted the crazy carriage, and swayed his huge body to and fro, causing the astonished springs to groan beneath the unaccustomed weight. Satisfied with the result, the horse was ordered out, and after the usual tedious delays which ever accompany a start in France, we passed out of the yard, the landlord doing us the honour of enacting the part of coachman. It was now ten o'clock, and we were about forty miles from Clermont. To our question, how long it would take us to travel to our destination, our driver, with an expression of countenance which gave the lie direct to his words, assured us we should be at Clermont in eight hours; but as our rate of travelling did not exceed four miles an hour, and our horse was not the most lively in the world, we soon abandoned all hopes of seeing Clermont by the light of that day's sun. As we pro-

gressed, our rate of speed fell off in an alarming ratio, and before long our horse's pace dwindled to a walk, from which all the vociferations of our coachman, accompanied by numberless applications of the whip, entirely failed to rouse him. Such was the state of our fortunes, when the trampling of horses and rumbling of wheels were heard behind us. On looking round, we beheld a huge diligence emerging from a cloud of dust, the horses, wonderful to relate, careering along with, for a French public conveyance, surprising celerity.

It was on the point of passing us, when our driver threw down the reins of his horse, jumped from his seat, and rushed after the diligence, vociferating loudly. The conducteur descended from his high seat of office; an interview took place between him and our coachman, and the latter returned to us, announcing that the diligence was travelling to Clermont, that there were three vacant places, and that we had better avail ourselves of them. His advice was not to be rejected. In a few minutes our luggage and ourselves were transferred to the public vehicle, and we now began again to entertain hopes of sleeping that night at Clermont. These were strengthened by seeing, after we had travelled about an hour, the celebrated Puy de Dome, like a shadowy earth bubble, with its attendant range of volcanic mountains, rising to the south. By degrees we drew nearer to them, and towards the afternoon fairly emerged from the monotonous, though rich plains

of Limagne, and entered the uplands. As we approached Clermont the diligence stopped to enable the passengers to alight and walk up a steep hill. While descending from the coupé, my eyes fell on the face of my friend, who looked woefully ill. He had been seized by a violent fit of what had every appearance of being cholera—he was suffering acute agony, and writhed in pain. With the assistance of a fellow passenger, I supported the invalid into a neighbouring vineyard, where we laid him down in the shade of the vines, for the heat was excessive. Among the passengers was a physician, who, on hearing of my friend's illness, offered his services. I drew him aside, and expressed my apprehensions that cholera was the cause of the sudden illness. 'On that score,' said he, 'you may be perfectly tranquil, for no case of cholera has ever occurred in Auvergne.' He was not bold enough to say that the terrible disease would never enter the province, but he assured me that my friend was not suffering from it. The result confirmed his assertion.\* In the course of a short time my companion had sufficiently recovered from the spasms to be moved into the diligence, which was waiting for us; and giving him my seat in the coupé, we set off on our

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\* He was correct, also, in declaring that cholera had not visited Auvergne. It had circled this region of extinct volcanos, slaying thousands, but in no instance had it penetrated the province. Another proof of the mysterious nature of this disease.

last stage, and finally reached Clermont about five o'clock,—after difficulties which the reader will admit were sufficiently harassing. We found the Hôtel de l'Ecu, which is the best in Clermont, in a state of mad bustle and excitement, consequent on the arrival, the previous evening, of Rachel the actress, and a troupe of artists from the Odéon. This was made an excuse for putting us into shabby holes of bed-rooms; however, by dint of remonstrating, I finally contrived to obtain better apartments. As usual, the beds were clean and comfortable, but the noise extended far into the night.

## CHAPTER III.

A GLANCE at Clermont is sufficient to make the visitor aware of its volcanic origin. Not that the public buildings, as such, were vomited forth from the surrounding craters, but the materials composing them are dark lava. The entire town is built of this substance, and the streets paved with it; the inhabitants, however, wearied and saddened by the lugubrious hue of their houses, determined a few years ago to whitewash them, which had the effect of instantaneously changing their dull complexion—and now Clermont, under its white mask, wears a more cheerful aspect. The roadways, nevertheless, are as black and dirty as they were sixty-two years ago, when Young wrote of them—‘Clermont is in the midst of a most curious country, all volcanic; there are many streets that can, for blackness, dirt, and ill scents, only be represented by narrow channels cut in a night dunghill.’ But so much of the picturesque attaches to these narrow and crooked ways that, as a mere wayfarer, I was glad they had not given place to wide, straight thoroughfares, intersecting the town at right angles to each other. No one can deny that the broad streets in our provincial towns, with their spacious trottoirs, and prim, stiff, cast-iron gas lamp-

pillars, are not a thousand times more convenient than the alleys of communication in a French country town, and that our houses, all east, as it were, from the same mould, are more comfortable than the projecting gables and high-roofed edifices of our neighbours. But as a beggar in rags and unshorn hair is a more picturesque object than a spruce tradesman, so are these continental houses and streets, dirty and tattered though they be, far more engaging to the artist than those of our clean English towns. Our first visit was to the cathedral, which stands in the centre of the town on the summit of an eminence; houses cluster round it, incasing its sides, and in many places blotting out the beautiful tracery of the windows. Strange that so many splendid cathedrals at home and abroad should continue to be so disfigured! The phrenzied hand of revolution has dealt harshly with the great house of God in Clermont, and had not a brave citizen stood up in its defence, the enraged and maddened mob would have levelled it to the ground. Already the spoilers had commenced the work of destruction, when M. Latour suggested that the building would be useful for public meetings. This happy thought turned their wrath aside, and the cathedral was spared. More astonishing is the preservation of some exquisite painted windows which shed hues of interwoven brilliance throughout the vast interior. The present inhabitants of Clermont do not appear to have any great respect for their cathedral, as they make it a thoroughfare from one

street to another. The view from the summit of the tower is particularly striking; the Puy de Dome, the chief of a host of Puys, rises grandly over its subjects :—

Si Dôme était sur Dôme,  
On verrait les portes de Rome,

says the popular adage; and although the mountain is only 4846 feet above the sea, its bold configuration yet gives it an air of imposing grandeur.

The architectural gem of Clermont is the very ancient church of Nôtre Dame du Port, situated in one of the most labyrinthine parts of the town. It is a Romanesque edifice, dating probably from the tenth century. The walls are of castle-like thickness, defying the sun's powers as well as those of man. At the time of our visit, the weather out of doors was suffocatingly oppressive, while within this old church the temperature was deliciously cool. Beneath the choir, inlaid with rough mosaics, is a most curious crypt, the abiding-place of one of the numerous family of black virgins, who are traditionally reported to have sprung from deep wells, but which, unlike Truth, the inhabitant of those localities, have done little to enlighten mankind. Out of respect to the black vestal, the vault is lighted by ever-burning lamps, which cast a religious hue on the surrounding objects. From early morn, until the church doors are closed, the floor is filled by kneeling figures, supplicating aid from the little sombre image, in groups forming capital studies for the artist.

The geological student will do well, before entering into the heart of Auvergne, to visit the Musée of Clermont, where a very extensive and complete collection of mineral specimens will be found, as well as coloured sections of the strata. These will greatly aid him in comprehending the geological features of the country. Among the minerals, but out of place, is the skull of a skeleton found on the summit of the Puy St. Romain, in 1840, in a grave of cinders cased with tufa-bricks; a bracelet was on the right arm, and a sword lying by its side. In the library, which adjoins the mineralogical room, is a well-executed marble statue of Pascal. On one side of the pedestal is a representation, in gold, of the Puy de Dome, and a barometer; but a strange liberty has been taken with the mountain, the artist having depicted it as peaked, while it is in reality a dome.

It required considerable courage to enter the botanical gardens, so fiercely did the sun blaze. There are a vast number of eastern plants, which seem to thrive well in the open air, but the garden generally exhibits few signs of attention; the walks were covered with weeds, and hundreds of lizards darted about in unmolested playfulness.

One of the most curious sights of Clermont is what is vulgarly called the petrifying spring, in the Faubourg St. Alyre. This is a fountain, which contains so large a proportion of carbonate of lime, as to incrust, in a very short time, any object placed



within it. In the course of ages it has formed a bridge of tufa of great length and thickness, and another is in process of formation, which grows at the rate of three inches annually. The water is collected in two large tanks, from which it drips into two chambers furnished with shelves. On these are placed various objects for incrustation. Stuffed monkeys, parrots, dogs, cats, and birds, were in different stages of transition; some nearly covered by the stony coat, others with their fur or hair delicately powdered, wearing a grisly appearance. The largest animal was a donkey, whose back and sides were coated. Fruits and the most delicate plants were undergoing the same process. The sediment deposited is so fine, that it is perfectly practicable to obtain the sharpest casts from moulds. The water is used also for bathing purposes. I was rather amused by the pains taken to impress upon me that no danger of being turned into stone during the process of taking a bath was to be feared. It appears, however, that some individuals are apprehensive of such a calamity, for they assign it as a reason for not availing themselves of the baths. In former days, when priestcraft was little scrupulous as to the means it employed to gain and retain ascendancy over human minds, St. Alyre, under whose particular protection the waters of the fountain were supposed to be, was declared to have endowed them with miraculous virtue, in proof of which their incrusting qualities were adduced. In the hands of the ministering powers of the Convent

of St. Alyre, various marvellous cures were said to have been performed by the waters, and multitudes flocked to fling their diseased limbs into the spring and their alms into the church coffers.

To the geologist, the fountain of St. Alyre reveals one of nature's wonderful processes. As Dr. Daubeny observes, the extraordinary quantity of travertine constantly deposited by the water affords undoubted evidence of a languid action of volcanic forces at work underneath, the remains of that period of mighty throes and convulsions, which, at some long past and unknown epoch, desolated this portion of France.

On the second evening after our arrival at Clermont, we went to see Mademoiselle Rachel in Racine's 'Phèdre.' It was her last performance here. I had secured orchestral stalls in the morning, on payment of five francs each. Such seats in London, when Rachel performed there, cost twenty-five. The theatre was crowded with the élite of Clermont. The women shone more by reason of their gaudy-coloured attire than their beauty. The enthusiasm and furore were of course immense, evaporating in huge bouquets and garlands, which more than once converted the stage into a parterre of flowers. Rachel is unquestionably a great actress, wielding all the passions with consummate skill and powerful effect. These, however, are sadly thrown away on the French drama, in which there is scarcely any true poetry. Rachel, as *Lady Macbeth*, in that glorious tragedy,

unfettered by rhyming verse, would indeed be worth seeing. 'Je regrettois,' says Voltaire, alluding to English dramatic writers, 'cette heureuse liberté que vous avez d'écrire vos tragédies en vers non rimés;' and certainly the frothy, mucilaginous, ear-wearying rhymes in a French tragedy are sorely detrimental to impressive dramatic effect. When we left the theatre an electrical storm was playing off its matchless fireworks; forked lightning, blue as steel, illumined the city, flashing out the outline of the old cathedral; while the thunder roared grandly, and echoed magnificently among the mountains.

The lightning mounts his steed, he strides the air,  
And the abyss shouts, from her depths laid bare,  
'Heaven, hast thou secrets?'

In the midst of the storm, the great actress departed from Clermont. Her carriage was a huge first-class diligence, the freighting of which had much amused me during the afternoon; for on it had been piled some dozens of large black cases, containing theatrical dresses. Rachel occupied the coupé: the intérieur and rotonde were filled by the artistes forming her troupe. Her destination was Moulins. For her provincial tour of three months she receives, we were told, eighty thousand francs. No marvel, therefore, at this rate of payment, that she is reputed wealthy. The simple fact that Mademoiselle Rachel was lodging in our hotel was quite sufficient to draw crowds round the doors all the day long; while within, bustle, confusion, and noise reigned during the twenty-

four hours. Our quarters greatly improved in comfort after the departure of the actors.

The guide-book held out pleasant promise that numerous riding-horses were to be hired in Clermont; and accordingly we made our plans to ride to the foot of the Puy de Dome. But, as we were told, the revolution had ruined the horse-keepers, and not even a pony was to be hired at present. Knowing from experience how little the information of French innkeepers is to be depended on, we made further inquiries in the town. It was quite true; the horse-keepers were 'banqueroute,'—not a steed was to be had,—so we hired a charabanc for our excursion. For some three or four miles beyond Clermont the road is hemmed in by high walls, affording no prospect but their own dreary barrenness. This longitudinal prison is provoking enough, as the mountain views, where they can be seen, in the vicinity of Clermont are fine and striking. The road ascends continually, so much so, indeed, that no time is gained by charabanc travelling. In a couple of hours we arrived at the small village of La Baraque, situated on the table land at the base of the Puy. Here we came to a halt at a cabin, on the front of which was set forth, in rude, misshapen characters, the name and calling of Monsieur Bartoncuf, who enjoys the monopoly of being sole guide to the wonders of the mountain. He presently made his appearance, bearing a geological hammer and staff,

and mounting behind us in the charabanc, we drove on to the foot of the mountain. Here we descended from our vehicle, and struck across an extensive sloping plain of lava and scoriæ, wearing as barren and ashy an appearance as if but lately cooled.

Presently we came to the ascent, rising at a pretty sharp angle. Here the sward was of the tenderest and softest velvet of Nature's cunning looms, enamelled by countless flowers of exquisite beauty. Flocks of sheep, whose fat flanks afforded pleasant evidence of the nutritious nature of their food, were feeding on the mountain, and myriads of bright-hued insects skimmed over and mingled with the flowers.

Up the Puy no guide is needed. The huge mass rises with true honesty of purpose, displaying its stupendous dome unwrinkled and unfissured. So any one with vigorous limbs may test their powers by striking straight upwards, while he whose legs lack good country education, may attain the summit by gradual zig-zags, which, however wearying to his impatience, will be holiday work for his feet.

The view from the top of the Puy is most singular. The whole country, with the exception of the plain of Limagne, is a congeries of volcanos. The guide, if you let him have his way, will give you a list of Puits, interminable and confusing. But I chose to dispense with this part of M. Bartoneuf's duties, preferring rather to contemplate the wonderful sight undisturbed. One of the most striking features

in these volcanos is the peculiar regularity of their craters. They are hollow, inverted cones, clothed to the bottom with delicate sward, and, as Scrope has observed, 'it is a somewhat singular spectacle, to see a herd of cattle quietly grazing above the orifice whence such furious explosions once broke forth.' It is remarkable that the Puy de Dome, which rises from among these volcanos, should differ entirely in its mineralogical character from the Puys on either side of it. Dr. Daubeny, who has examined these mountains with great attention, states that the Puy de Dome is composed almost entirely of a rock with a felspar base allied to trachyte, but of a more earthy character, and containing more rarely crystals of glassy felspar.

On the topmost point of the mountain is a small obelisk of lava, used in the triangulated survey of the country; it bears, in deeply cut characters, the words — 'Napoléon Empereur.'

The Puy de Dome is a classical mountain to the natural philosopher, for on its summit, two centuries ago, was performed the decisive experiment which established the law of atmospheric pressure at different elevations. Pascal, whom Clermont justly considers as her most illustrious son, had proved, by an extremely cautious but conclusive inductive process, the existence of a real vacuum in the upper end of a barometrical tube. The Jesuits, headed by Father Noël, rector of their college at Paris, stoutly attacked Pascal's conclusions, contending that the space above

the mercurial column was corporeal, because it was visible and admitted light,—that nature abhorred a vacuum, and that the finer parts of the air were violently forced through the pores of the glass to occupy the deserted space. The open and ingenuous mind of the philosopher was irritated by these miserable sophisms and wretched dogmas. He boldly cast off the fetters of the church, and loving truth above all things, declared that *abhorrence* could not, in strict logic, be applied to nature, which is a mere personification, and incapable of passion, and added, ‘when the weakness of men is unable to find out the true causes of phenomena, they are most prone to employ their subtlety in substituting imaginary ones, which they express by specious names, which fill the ear without satisfying the judgment.’ When Pascal wrote thus he was only twenty-four years of age. But he did not rest satisfied with controversy. He determined on an experiment which should visibly demonstrate the pressure of the atmosphere at various elevations. From Paris he wrote to his brother-in-law Périer, who resided at Clermont, requesting him to carry a barometer to the summit of the Puy de Dome, and observe the effect of the atmosphere at that elevation. This was in November, 1647. Circumstances prevented the experiment being performed until the following year. On the 19th September, 1648, Périer and a few friends met in the lowest part of Clermont, provided with two glass tubes hermetically sealed at one end. These were filled and inverted, as usual,

and the mercury was found to stand in both tubes at the height of 28 inches. Leaving one of the tubes behind, Périér proceeded to the top of the mountain, when he was greatly delighted to find the mercury sink more than three inches, and remain stationary at the height of 24·7 inches. In descending the mountain, he observed that the mercury gradually rose, and on arriving at the station in the town from whence he set out, the mercury stood exactly at the same point as at first. This experiment, it might be imagined, would have set at rest for ever all doubts respecting the effects of atmospheric pressure. But although reasoning men became convinced of the existence of a vacuum, there were others who clung with strange pertinacity to their old creed. The Jesuits of the college at Clermont scrupled not to pervert Pascal's words, and even contest the fidelity of his experiments. Charges of heresy even were threatened. But truth ultimately prevailed, and the great writer subsequently directed his powerful pen with great force and justice against that formidable order. His opinion of them may be gathered from this sentence in his '*Pensées*:' '*Les Jesuites concluent toujours que leurs adversaires sont hérétiques.*' He might, with good reason, have supposed them using the language of the prelates in the Council of Trent, who, says Bacon, '*declared that astronomers feigned eccentrics and epicycles, and such engines of orbs, to save the phenomena, though they knew there were no such things.*'

In descending the Puy de Dome we visited the



Puy de Pariou, which possesses the most perfect crater among the Clermont group of volcanos. It is 3000 feet in circumference, and 300 feet deep. The edge of the orifice is very sharply defined, and so narrow, that in many places it is scarcely wide enough to afford footing. Another singularly perfect crater, though somewhat smaller, adjoining the Puy de Pariou, is called the Nid de Poule, but it would be more appropriate to call it Nid d'Autruche, or boldly assign it to the Dinornis of New Zealand.

We returned to Clermont by the Val de Fontanat; an elysium for French tourists. It is certainly a charming valley, abounding in scenes of great beauty, but scarcely merits the pompous and high-flown descriptions given of it by native writers. However, coming on such a scene, after passing through the dreary plains of France, would, by its delightful contrast, heighten all the beauties of the landscape. Fountains of crystal water gush forth in great profusion from beds of basalt down the valley, turning numerous tiny water-wheels in their progress, and thus contradicting the Spanish proverb, which says, 'Aguas pasadas no muelen molino.' The waters, after doing good service in the valley, are collected at Royat in a large tank and conducted by pipes to Clermont. A short distance above Royat our guide drew our attention to an aqueduct cut in the granite, the work, as he declared, of the Romans, who made use of it to supply their camp on the hill of Gergovia with water.

This was the scene of Cæsar's memorable defeat by the Gauls, fifty-three years B. C., which compelled him to evacuate the country.

The French are proud of this achievement. 'We ought not to remain satisfied,' says an Auvergnat, swelling with provincial pride, in a book descriptive of Clermont and its neighbourhood, 'until an obelisk be erected on the topmost point of the mountain of Gergovia, which should inform strangers that here, Vercingétorix, at the head of 40,000 Gauls, defeated the Roman army commanded by Cæsar. It would be well to add, that Gergovia is also memorable as the site of the chief city of the Averni, whence Auvergne.

There is an endless variety of sweet subjects for the pencil in the valley of Royat. The Puy de Dome fills the back ground looking up the valley with imposing effect, sometimes being seen through groves of rich chestnut trees.

The village is a wretchedly dirty place, intersected by narrow alleys, through which crawl a miserable squalid population. Below the village, the stream which comes down the valley has cut through the bed of basaltic lava to a depth of sixty-five feet, and carved out a kind of grotto, one of the show places of Royat.

At a small inn—'Le Rendezvous des Artistes,'—we parted from our guide. He evidently set a high value on his services, for he demanded a fee of ten francs. A little discussion soon led

him to be most thankful for half that sum, to which, however, we added a *pour boire* and a dinner. He had lost, he said, by the *maudite* revolution, twenty-five Louis last year, not a traveller having ventured into the wild district of Auvergne. The *aubergiste*, whose house was said to be much patronized by visitors, showed us his book. I had the curiosity to enumerate the number of his artist guests during past years. They were, in 1846, 15; 1847, 10; 1848, 1. ‘*C’est la révolution, n’est ce pas,*’ said I, pointing to the last figure, ‘*qui est cause de ce petit chiffre là?*’ ‘*Ah, mon Dieu!—oui,*’ was his reply.

Refreshed by a bottle of very good wine, we set off for Clermont, distant three miles, and entered it as its—

spires,  
Were lighted up by the fires  
Of the sun going down in the west.

## CHAPTER IV.

CLERMONT is certainly an interesting city. There is no end to its architectural relics of olden days, and to its narrow streets, which seem to defy the improving or spoiling hand of time. They carry the imagination back to past ages—when Peter the Hermit in his pilgrim robes stood surrounded by the imposing majesty of pope, archbishops, and bishops, and urged the multitude to hasten and do battle against the Saracen. That, indeed, was a stupendous triumph. For when the hermit had forsaken the studious repose of the cloisters for the plains of Palestine, his fondest, wildest day-dreams must have fallen short of this first visible outbreak of religious enthusiasm. An old chronicler declares, that neither Clermont, nor the adjoining towns and villages, could lodge the people who came to hear the hermit's exhortations. The thousands were lashed into the maddest excitement by the tongue of that one man. The pious among the clergy hailed with devout joy this opportunity of propagating the saving doctrines of the cross; the worldly, that of more strongly riveting on the heart of man their own spiritual influence. The most horrible execrations were uttered against the Turks. Their expulsion from the Holy Land

was determined on. 'Dieux le volt ! Dieux le volt !' shouted the surging multitude. 'Yes,' exclaimed Pope Urban, 'God willeth it ; His divine commandment has been echoed this day by your voices.' Then, elevating a cross before the multitude, he added—'Jesus Christ has left his tomb to present you with this symbol—let it be bound on your shoulders and your breasts—let it shine on your banners, and decorate your weapons, that you may always remember that Christ died for you, and that, therefore, it is your bounden duty to die for him.' Again the heaving and agitated mass cried—'Dieux le volt !'\* The Pope then commanded silence, and the work of absolving the assembly from their sins commenced.

Superstition, as was usual at that period, accompanied this great demonstration. It was firmly believed by the people that their determination to tear

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\* Wordsworth has finely described this scene—

And shall, the pontiff asks, profaneness flow  
From Nazareth—source of Christian piety—  
From Bethlehem, from the mounts of agony  
And glorified ascension ? Warriors, go ;  
With prayers and blessings we your path will sow ;  
Like Moses, hold our hands erect, till ye  
Have chased far off, by righteous victory,  
These sons of Amalek, or laid them low.  
'God willeth it,' the whole assembly cry,  
Shout which the enraptured multitude astounds !  
The council roof and Clermont's towers reply,  
'God willeth it,' from hill to hill rebounds,  
And in awe-stricken countries far and nigh,  
Through Nature's hollow arch the voice resounds.

the unbeliever from the tomb of Christ was instantaneously known in the most remote parts of Europe. The wonderful quickness with which the call for soldiers in the cause was replied to, doubtless gave ground for this belief. The proposed expedition had scarcely been rumoured in England, ere Richard, of courage leonine, buckled on his armour, and took the road of God, as the route to the east was devoutly called.

The results were as mighty as the most fanatical devotee could desire ; and to this day the citizens of Clermont are proud that in their city such a mighty movement was originated. Urban II. was not the only Pope who honoured Clermont with a visit. Several of his successors attended councils. Alexander III. presided at that held in 1162, when the Emperor Barbarossa and his adherents were excommunicated ; and on several occasions the thunders of the church were hurled from Clermont at kings and princes. And in later times, as I shall have occasion to show, when sovereigns could be no longer persecuted, humble individuals fell beneath the intolerance and oppression of the ghostly power of Clermont.

I was not a little surprised to find that, although a large amount of trade was carried on between Clermont and Paris, English gold was refused. The landlord of our hotel declared that he did not know the value of our sovereign, but he would venture to take it for twenty francs. We had been careful to supply ourselves in Paris with a certain

number of Napoleons for our wants in the south-east of France, being told that at Clermont English gold would be received; however, experience proved the reverse. Not wishing to submit to a sacrifice, I asked the address of a banker, and was directed to the most important in Clermont. I found my man ensconced in a very business-like-looking apartment, surrounded by money-bags, which gave fair evidence of his ability to purchase my English gold.

To my question to this effect, he replied that it would be in his way of business to do so.

Looking at the last Paris paper, which quoted the course of exchange at 25fr. 40ct., he offered to give me 23 francs for each pound, and was as much surprised at my refusal to part with my gold on these terms, as I was at his offer. I left his office, and had just gained the street, when a clerk ran after me, and begged that I would return to the banker. I did so, expecting a more liberal offer. 'Monsieur,' said the Clermont Plutus, for I heard afterwards that he was a very wealthy man, 'I have requested you to return; I will purchase your sovereigns. You shall have 23 francs and 50 cents for each.' 'Indeed,' I replied, 'I shall have no such thing, and you shall not have my gold.' I left the room, not a little indignant at being recalled, and determined to keep my sovereigns until some more auspicious occasion should offer of changing them. Nor had I reason to repent my resolve, for a Parisian at Mont Dore subsequently gave me the full value for them. I have mentioned

this little monetary transaction as a caution to travellers proposing to visit Auvergne. They will do well to exchange their English gold in Paris, unless they are content to submit to such a sacrifice as the Clermont banker proposed.

We took our departure from Clermont for Mont Dore in a small diligence, which held out promises of reaching its destination in six hours. There are two roads—the grande and petite route; and as both present interesting scenery, we resolved on going by the first, and returning to Clermont by the second. In both cases the road, as far as the base of the Puy de Dome, is the same; there the division takes place. We were amused by the conducteur opening the door of the coupé in which we were seated, when the diligence stopped at the foot of the mountain, and, with a gracious smile, saying, ‘Messieurs, vous avez le droit de vous promener.’ Our third in the coupé, a Parisian gentleman, on his way to Mont Dore in quest of health, laughed heartily, and declared that the République was particularly liberal, as it gave its citizens three great privileges—walking, mounting guard, and paying taxes.

The distance to Mont Dore by the grande route is thirty-three English miles, the half of which a good pedestrian will probably walk. The hills are, indeed, endless, the road being carried, in utter defiance of all modern engineering philosophy, over, instead of round them. However, after all, the tourist is no loser by this undulatory traverse, for it gives him far



better opportunities of seeing the country than if he were confined to the valleys. And a most remarkable country it is,—very volcanic, and presenting in many places vast masses of scoriform and highly cellular lava. These are so numerous at Gravenoire, that, as is stated, a professor in the Academy of Clermont, when the volcanic nature of that mountain was first asserted, contended that the scoriæ could much more easily be accounted for by the existence of large iron foundries, which he had heard were formerly in operation on the spot. Stupendous, indeed, they must have been,—Titanic Vulcans the workers. And here must the *furnalia* have been held in honour of the god of furnaces.

There is, however, a happy blending of pastoral and sylvan scenes with the rugged desolation produced by the volcanic fires when the world was probably in its infancy; and there are many spots of great beauty which arrest the traveller's attention. The diligence stopped at Rochefort, a small town, most picturesquely situated between Clermont and Mont Dore, to allow the passengers to breakfast, and, what was of more importance, the horses to dine,—for the poor beasts are condemned to drag the lumbering vehicle the entire distance.

The aforesaid breakfast was to us an early dinner, and we whiled away the remaining time before the diligence started, by sketching the ruined castle on the summit of the Roche-fort, which belonged, in time past, to the Dauphins of Auvergne.

The afternoon was fading into eve when we mounted the last hill, from which we saw the valley of Mont Dore. The road is one continuous descent to the village. Long before reaching it, we met groups of pedestrians, who, by their gay attire, gave evidence of our proximity to a French watering-place. They stared at us with all the eagerness which the arrival of a public coach in a retired town invariably creates. Who were we?—Frenchmen or foreigners; convalescents or invalids? Would we assist at the parties of pleasure, or be dull and melancholy? We entered the village; the diligence which left Clermont at the same hour that we had done, but which had travelled by the petite route, was close behind us, and so we clattered through the one street, and finally came to a halt in a square formed by the largest hotels. As at the watering places in the Pyrenees, we were immediately surrounded by a great concourse of men and women, clamorously urging us to patronize the hotels which they represented. At Clermont, a friend of M. Lecocq's, the well known savant, had kindly recommended us, on the part of the latter, who was from home, to the Hôtel Boyer Parisien, and had inscribed the recommendation on a page of my note-book, adding, that the juste prix for boarding and lodging was five francs a day. The house to our left bore the name in large gilt letters, Hôtel Boyer Bertrand Parisien, and never doubting the identity of this establishment with that recommended by M. Lecocq, we ordered our luggage to be carried thither.

The landlady, a bustling personage, led the way up stairs to two well-furnished rooms, with beds in the recesses. For these rooms, and boarding, she demanded sixteen francs a day. This was six more than had been written down as the *juste prix*, so I was resolved to try the magic of M. Lecocq's name.

Pulling out my note-book, I opened it at the page where his recommendation was written. 'See, Madam,' I said, 'M. Lecocq, whom you doubtless know well, as he has often lodged in your house, has recommended us to come here, and has stated that the *juste prix* for such accommodation as you offer is five francs a day per head.' And as I said this, I drew the landlady's attention to the figure five. 'Monsieur Lecocq est un fameux homme,' replied Madame, 'and bien bon; but five francs is too little for such apartments and living as my house affords.' 'Well,' I answered, 'we will not waste time or words on the question. You declare that you cannot accommodate us for the sum mentioned by M. Lecocq, so we must try our fortune elsewhere, for there are, I see, many hotels in Mont Dore.' With these words, I took up my cloak to leave the room; but, as I half expected, Madame Bertrand was not disposed to part with us. 'Restez, Messieurs, restez!' she exclaimed; and so we were installed in our new quarters, at the charge of five francs a day, to which we agreed to add half a franc daily for the servants. After all, it appeared that, owing to the similarity of names, we had not come to the hotel recommended

by M. Lecocq, but it was clearly not Madame Bertrand's interest to set us right.

The day was too far advanced to enable us to do more than make a home acquaintance with the village and valley. The first is learnt by heart in a few minutes. One church, one large bath-house, some half dozen hotels, and some half hundred small houses, constitute the place, forming one street. The village has grown with the reputation of the baths. No bold speculator built the hotels first, trusting that patients would fill them; but hotel after hotel has been added to meet the demand for more accommodation; and the consequence is, a number of huge buildings standing here and there, turning their backs on the lovely valley. Indeed, although most beautiful scenes abound within rifle shot of the village, not a single boarding-house commands them. So the tourist who is here for other purposes than bathing, will mourn over the barbarous taste of the Mont Dore architects.

The baths are more remarkable for their solidity than elegance. Built of stone, they cover a large space of ground, and include the hot springs, which were well known to the Romans. The principal source is still covered with its original Roman roof. A covered portico admits of promenading during the morning, when the waters are drunk. There is a large salon, used occasionally for réunions and balls. By the side of the Dordogne, a small stream which rises at the head of the valley and flows past the village, a promenade has been made, at one end of

which the Roman remains which have from time to time been discovered are placed. They are numerous, and include portions of gigantic columns, capitals, &c., testifying to the colossal nature of the buildings reared by the Romans. The view, looking towards the head of the valley, is extremely fine; peaked mountains, dominated by the Pic de Sancy, the highest elevation in central France, stand up in all the wild array of basaltic forms, fissured and streaming with waterfalls. To the right, dense woods clothe the sides of the valley, surmounted by a peak which, from its cowl-like summit, has received the name of the Capucin. Looking downwards, the valley expands and assumes a more pastoral appearance; meadows of emerald green line the slopes, peopled by flocks and herds, which are destined to play no unimportant part in the domestic economy of Mont Dore.

The morning after our arrival I rose early, with the intention of indulging in a warm bath. On applying to the director of the bath establishment, I found that unless I entered myself as an invalid, requiring a series of baths, I could not obtain one during the early morning hours. The *service*, as it is called, for the patients, commences at four, and continues until about nine, though in crowded seasons the baths are used earlier and later. After nine o'clock, I was permitted to bathe. A rough Auvergnat, the very reverse of Egeria's nymph, insisted on undressing me, declaring that it was always customary for gentlemen frequenting the baths to be thus attended.

My valet was very loath to permit me to enter the bath until he knew the temperature which Monsieur le Medecin had prescribed. It was in vain I assured him that I was no invalid, but merely desirous of a bath for my own gratification. This appeared so exceedingly improbable to him, that he absolutely refused to fill the bath until he had inquired from the director whether my statement were correct. He returned satisfied, but still could not understand how I could take what he called outward medicine.

There are various springs under the same roof. All the waters rise from fissures in the trachytic rock. Here is a list of them, and of their temperature:—

	Fahrenheit.
Fontaine de St. Marguerite . . . . .	Cold.
Do. de Tambour . . . . .	ditto.
Do. de Caroline . . . . .	113°
Bains de César . . . . .	113°
Grand Bain . . . . .	106°
Bain Ramond . . . . .	107°
Source Rigny . . . . .	107°
Fontaine de la Madelain . . . . .	113°·5

Left happily, at length, to my own devices, I luxuriated in my bath, turning on the hot or cold springs as suited my inclination. The water has not that soft, satinizing effect which characterises the baths at Schlangenbad, where, according to the authority of the author of the ‘Bubbles,’ the French gentleman, after immersion, became absolutely amoureux de soi-même; but they impart a soothing, pleasant sensation, which causes one to dally long in the element.

On ringing a bell, my attendant came with a large wooden cylinder full of warm sheets and towels, with which he rubbed me in true shampooing fashion. By the time I had completed my toilet, the summons for breakfast pealed from the hotels. On repairing to my quarters, I found the company assembling fast, and ere we sat down I was enabled to form outward acquaintance with my fellow-guests. There were about half a hundred ladies and gentlemen. Remembering the sanatory fame of Mont Dore, I was quite prepared to see pale faces and decrepit forms, such as are frequently found in watering places—but not so here. Health of the ruddiest and most vigorous nature seemed to have taken up her abode with them. Sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks abounded among the ladies, and the gentlemen appeared fully equal to climbing the steepest heights in the vicinity. It may have been that the waters had produced these happy results,—that the guests had arrived invalids, but that now, as the season was far advanced, health and activity had taken the place of sickness and weakness. Certainly a merrier party never were assembled than those whom we had the happiness of meeting at the table-d'hôte of Madame Boyer Bertrand's hotel. My friend and myself were the only English present, the rest of the company being principally Parisians. The breakfast differed in no way from a dinner, excepting in the absence of soup. There were innumerable dishes, messes, and hashes, such as are prodigally outpoured from the abundant

resources of a French cuisine; and most ample justice was done to them. Indeed, the man who is horrified by seeing the fair sex partake of more than a sippet, or a dainty slice of a pullet, would be fairly outraged at Mont Dore. It should be remembered, however, that the air is most appetizing—that the patients, or visitors rather, have been up since dawn, and have eaten nothing since five o'clock the previous evening.

The one only condiment forbidden by the *médecin* is mustard. On my asking for this, the *garçon* stared; ‘*Mais, Monsieur,*’ said he, with great gravity, ‘*c’est expressement défendu.*’ But tumblers-full of sour wine at breakfast are *en règle*—we alone drank coffee. Breakfast over, the company dispersed to their rooms, and presently re-appeared, equipped for riding. The little square before our hotel was filled with troops of horses, of all sizes, colours, and shapes, the owners energetically vociferating the excellent qualities of their steeds. As the hire of a horse for the entire day is only three francs, nobody thinks of walking; those ladies who are unable to ride are carried in chairs, by stalwart porteurs, even to the summits of the highest mountains. It was a curious spectacle to see the preparations of the various parties for their excursions. Great was the competition to obtain the most serviceable-looking horses; and as these were few in number, and the bidders many, they were soon hired. The majority of the nags were diminutive, and it was not uncommon to see



herculean riders mounted on dwarfish ponies, with limbs not much larger than those of a fine mountain dog.

The gay dresses assumed by equestrian parties in the Pyrenean watering-places were wanting at Mont Dore. There, it is not uncommon to see ladies arrayed in every variety of garb and colour, with boots and spurs, and red sashes, galloping wildly over the mountains. The Mont Dore damsels were of soberer inclinations, being perfectly satisfied with the quiet amble of their steeds. The first excursion generally made is to the Pic de Sancy. I joined a party thither, consisting of two ladies and three gentlemen. Our road lay up the valley. In a few minutes we had passed the houses, and felt the fresh mountain-breezes round us. About a quarter of a mile from the town, a waterfall, called the Grande Cascade, appears in the fissure of a precipice, composed of strata of trachyte, tufa, and basalt. It is dashed to spray and foam long before reaching the bottom, recalling to mind the lines of Shelley, applied to the nymph of another cascade—

She leapt down the rocks  
With her rainbow locks  
Streaming amongst the streams.

In an hour we attained the head of the valley, and crossing the Dordogne, here a brawling, noisy infant of a river, plunged into the wild hollows of the broken land, amidst abrupt rocks and desolate chasms, and, passing these, came upon a steep rocky path,

which led to the Pic. It was severe work for the horses. No one would have congratulated me on the selection I had made; but, in truth, I had contented myself with simply choosing a wiry, sinewy beast, whose knees gave no indications of having made intimate acquaintance with the rocks. I have great faith in mountain-horses—nor without reason; for during many tours in Switzerland, and numerous excursions in the Pyrenees, where the mountains are little better than rocky ladders, the horses which I have ridden have in no one instance fallen. Careful riding is necessary to lead to such a result. I cannot think that the advice, so often given, to leave the horse to himself, is judicious. Let him use his eyes, as he assuredly will, but let the rider also use his own; which, being more elevated than those of his horse, may be made to do good service. The reins should be held very lightly; but no one who has any regard for his neck will part with the bridle, and permit his horse to feel himself at uncontrolled liberty. If I have been indebted to the instinct of my horse for preservation in treacherous and dangerous Alpine passes, which I am very willing to concede, I hold it to be equally true that there have been moments when a steady hand and a quick eye have, on my part, conferred a similar benefit on my horse.

The rider, while giving his beast credit for great instinct, must not forget that the animal is devoid of all understanding, excepting his four pillars of sup-

port. The royal psalmist has told us this, as the reader will see if he turns to the 32<sup>nd</sup> *Psalm*.

We had not ascended many yards, when a sharp turn brought us before a charming cascade, which shot into life and light from the depths of a pine-forest, and fell like shivered diamonds amongst the rocks below. It bears the name of the Cascade du Serpent, and certainly bears, in its twining and wreathing falling columns of water, some resemblance to a brood of hissing snakes.

Up, still up—the sun's rays beating down upon us with painful intensity. Our progress was slow; but, as we ascended, fresh views of great magnificence came within our range. At the base of the cone, which constitutes the true Pic de Sancy, we dismounted, and leaving our horses in the care of some peasant-children, who pick up a few sous by this occupation, we clambered up the steep cone.

It is not often that the ascent of a high mountain is rewarded by perfect transparency of atmosphere; too frequently, mists gather round the summit and preclude all view. On this occasion we were most fortunate—not a cloud flecked the vault of heaven; and our height occasioned a coolness which was truly delightful. The Pic de Sancy, according to a recent government survey, is 6171 English feet above the sea-level. Thus it takes respectable rank amongst mountains; but it has claims of interest apart from its elevation.

It is the culminating point of that vast volcanic

crust, which swells and heaves through an area of fifty-six miles in circumference. Here the throes of nature were of the maddest and most stupendous description. The fundamental granite rocks—the foundations, as it were, of the world—were broken like glass, and gave way before the enormous upheaving force which brought forth mountains.

The depths of hell were laid bare. Huge contorted pinnacles of pitchstone porphyry, and breccia containing sulphur, are seen immediately beneath the Pic de Sancy, to the N.W., shooting up from the sides of the Gorge d'Enfer.\* Around, nothing but volcanic mountains meet the eye, their craters,—in many instances lakes,—fringed with woods, gleaming like orbs of molten silver. I had here a good opportunity of testing the value of excellent opera-glasses, which, having done efficient service during the London season, had accompanied me in my travels. After their last night at the opera, I had a strong leather case made for them, which I suspended by a strap round my shoulder—thus they were easily accessible. The advantage which they possess over a telescope is very great; they can be used in a moment and require but little adjustment, and fatigue the eye much less than a telescope does; and, if they are powerful, will be quite as

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\* Dr. Daubeny suggests, in reference to this Gorge, that the name of Auvergne may be derived from certain appearances, that might have reminded its first settlers of the lake *Avernus*, near Naples.

serviceable. With mine, I was enabled to scan the whole range of the Mont Dore region, which is, indeed, pregnant with interest. The summit of the Pic de Sancy would make a fitting platform for a geologist; and I could not help wishing that the Dean of W—— had the geological section of the British Association grouped around him, while he held forth from the top of the obelisk which crowns the Pic. With such materials at hand, what a splendid lecture would he give!

We had not been long on the mountain-top ere we were joined by other parties, who had left the village after us. The guides mustered strongly, and vied with each other in naming every peak and ravine, but, apart from this, their geological information was most barren. Not much lore ought, perhaps, to be expected from the poor fellows, when it is remembered that their pay is only two francs a-day.

Descending the cone, we mounted our horses, and cantered over a plateau of sward to the crest of the Puy Ferrand, for the purpose of obtaining a view of the Gorge de Chaudefour, with its extraordinary pyramids of breccia, which seem like colossal needles set in the flanks of the mountain. I longed to make closer acquaintance with these wonderful creations; and, as will be seen, had an opportunity subsequently of doing so.

On our way down the Pic, the guide pointed out two little bubbling springs—small beginnings of great things: the rill trickling from one is called the Dore,

that from the other the Dogne, and they, uniting, are married into the Dordogne, which becomes a portion of the Gironde. The French are not true lovers of nature—that is, of fresh, retiring nature, with the bloom of beauty on it. They cannot understand, because they do not feel, how much may be learnt in the seclusion of a forest. Warburton, writing to his friend Hurd, longs for his companionship in his country retirement, that he may ‘pick off for his amusement, during their rambles, a thousand notions which he had hung upon every thorn.’

Oft on the dappled turf at ease,  
I sit and play with similes,  
Loose types of things through all degrees.

This does not suit the bent of a Frenchman’s mind. He must make nature a ball-room, trick her out with gaudy belles, and then his sentimentality will outpour in addresses to the *lieux charmants, délicieux, &c.*, thus sanctified to him. So it was in the Pyrenees: Large parties would go forth, scouring the highways, dashing along in herds to well-known and frequented places, while the sublimity of the magnificent mountains, and the retirement of the gloomy grandeur of the pine-forests, were equally neglected. I never could prevail on a Frenchman, there or here, to join me in an excursion, which held out no other promise than that of communing with Nature in her most majestic mood.

My newly-made friends preferred spending the hours which intervened before dinner riding along

the road down the valley—I struck into the dark recesses of a pine-forest, following a path which led I knew not whither, nor cared, provided it was not to the abodes of man. And what have I to chronicle, that will benefit or interest the reader, respecting my explorations in these unfrequented groves? But little! This I may, however, write—that there are lovely sylvan scenes in that dark forest which clothes the western side of the valley, and that when the visitor at Mont Dore is tired of the bustle and prattle of the baths, he can in a few minutes escape from them, and

wander lonely as a cloud.

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

through the depths of these pine wildernesses.

I was not, however, so deeply enamoured of my solitude as to forget the dinner-hour. But, indeed, if within earshot of Mont Dore les Bains, the loud bells ringing together in the various hotels will render it impossible to do so. They ring thrice—loud, long peals, which must sound very unsatisfactory to those who would, but may not dine. Ere the second summons has died away, the majority of the company may be seen buzzing about the long dinner-tables, eager expectants of the coming feast—and as soon as the first stroke of the third peal is heard, all are seated and ready for the attack. Seeing, and having sensual demonstration of, the number and excellence of the condiments prepared for the guests at our hotel, it puzzled me much to guess aright from whence the

raw matériel came. True, a clever chef-de-cuisine will metamorphose an ignoble animal into a noble dish, but he must have a beast to begin with—‘Catch your hare first’—says the wise recipe—and, of a truth, the volcanic regions of Mont Dore do not produce many things available for the cuisine. As usual, the oldest residents in the hotel were placed nearest the head of the table, where, by the way, we observed the best dishes circulated. We juniors were at the bottom, not, however, without companions—pleasant, sociable Parisians, who chatted without reserve on the political aspect of their country, unanimous in deploring and condemning the Republic, but utterly unable to suggest any better form of government. I was deep in an argument with my neighbour, when a voice behind me exclaimed, in sterling English—‘Would you like some potatoes, sir?’ and turning round, I saw a servant with a dish of fine mealy potatoes in his hands. ‘You are English,’ I said—‘Yes, sir.’ ‘A servant of the house?’ ‘No, sir. My master is Monsieur Polignac, sitting near the head of the table.’ He added, that observing we were English he had thought we should like some potatoes, and had accordingly brought us a dish. This was kind and attentive, nor did his remembrance of us terminate with the esculent. On several occasions he laid violent hands on the best dishes near his master, and marched with them down the room to offer them to us. His well-meant kindness received a check one day. A little shrivelled-up Gascon, who seemed as if all the juices in his body had been



expressed, and who doubtless longed for the graviest and raciest dishes, looked desperately angry when, on three different occasions, our English friend handed us dainties, which he whisked back again to their original sites without giving our neighbours a chance of arresting their progress. ‘Écoutez,’ said the Gascon, ‘if you pass me again with a dish without offering it to me, I will report you to Madame the hostess.’ ‘I am not Madame’s servant,’ replied John, who, though English, spoke French as fluently as his own language. ‘Then,’ said the Gascon, ‘the dishes are hers, and you have no right to meddle with them.’ ‘What a —— old fool he is!’ exclaimed John to us; ‘can’t he mind his own business?’ Our neighbour pricked up his ear at the malediction, which no doubt made it tingle, for although, happily, entirely ignorant of the Saxon tongue, he had a cunning perception that honest John was not blessing him. The clatter of knives and forks gradually ceased—but still fresh dishes made their appearance: truly Madame Bertrand is no niggardly provider; and I am in duty bound to record that, whenever we dined at her table d’hôte, we had to complain more of superabundance than the contrary. Day after day, large bowls, full of delicious wood-strawberries came to table, chiefest and most patronized fruit of the dessert. With the ladies rose the gentlemen; the former retired to their rooms, but soon re-appeared in their bonnets. Then in parties we strolled up or down the valley, until the evening dews warned us—

or at least the more tender sex—to return. Another retiring, and the ladies came forth in evening costume, and entered the salon set apart for the guests. This, at our hotel as at the other establishments, was a large room, containing a piano and half-a-dozen card and chess tables, with the French newspapers. In a similar watering-place in Switzerland or Germany, *Galignani* would have been taken; here, however, it was not required. These evening réunions are exceedingly pleasant—were, it would perhaps be safer to write—for they must take their tone and colour from the company,—and it may have happened that our fellow-lodgers were superior to the general run of visitants. There was a total absence of ill-breeding, nor did I once see the floor polluted by a custom which has become disgracefully common in France. Whist, for the most slender stakes, is the favourite game—gambling being wholly discountenanced—and there is no chance of a man being arrested in his travels by losing all his money here. On two evenings during the week there is dancing, which is never prolonged beyond midnight. Here I saw the celebrated Auvergnese dance called the Bourrée, which is accompanied by music of a wild character. Thus, the lover of gaiety must not expect to find the pleasures of a fashionable German watering-place at Mont Dore. Generally speaking, before eleven o'clock the entire village, with its mixed population, is buried in profound repose, and I do not think that the most adventurous Romeo would succeed in finding a Juliet

standing at her balcony, sighing deep love, and gazing on the crystal stream, sparkling like silver beneath the beams of the moon, which during the first week of our sojourn lighted up the beautiful valley.

## CHAPTER V.

CLATTER, clatter! patter, patter! it must be rain, and yet how brightly the sun shines! I jumped from my bed, and, rushing to the window, threw it wide open. Not a cloud obscured the sky; the floodgates of heaven were closed fast for this day; but the patter went on. It was caused by the sabots of children, boys and girls, trotting up and down the street, with sheets and towels for the use of the patients, who were about undergoing sudatory and other ingenious watery processes. The man or woman who requires a long sleep will do well to court it during the early night hours at Mont Dore; for, from the earliest dawn, or even before it, slumber becomes difficult of peaceful accomplishment. So tired was I, that the pattering of sabots, and even louder noises, had failed to awaken me on the first morning of my abiding in Madame Bertrand's comfortable house; but on this, the second, I was constrained to leave the pleasant land of dreams long ere my spirit wished to do so. Then succeeded more violent noises; heavy steps on the stairs,—heavier over my head,—the creaking and straining of wood. Then a fall, as it were of a heavy body,—another edition of creaks and groans, succeeded again by steps on the

stairs, louder than before. I look out of the window, and presently see emerging from the door a roughly-constructed sedan chair, and seizing my opera glasses—which I always place convenient to the window, for neighbourly and friendly purposes—I see within the chair a figure enveloped in mantles, but of what sex I cannot say. Then another wooden box appears,—a third,—and soon the square is full of chairs, each borne off between two men, who are trotting with the patients to the baths. And it is not five o'clock. I thought how applicable to what I had heard and seen are the lines in 'The New Bath Guide,' a series of poetical epistles descriptive of Bath at the commencement of this century:—

This morning, dear Mother, as soon as 'twas light,  
 I was wak'd by a noise that astonish'd me quite,  
 For in Tabitha's room I heard such a clatter,  
 I could not conceive what the deuce was the matter;  
 And, would you believe it, I went up and found her  
 In a blanket, with two lusty fellows around her,  
 Who both seem'd a going to carry her off in  
 A little black box, just the size of a coffin.  
 'Pray tell me,' says I, 'what ye're doing of there?'  
 'Why, master, 'tis hard to be bilk'd of our fare,  
 And so we were thrusting her into a chair;  
 We don't see no reason for using us so,  
 For she bade us come hither, and now she won't go:  
 We've earned all our fare, for we both came and knock'd her  
 Up, as soon as 'twas light, by advice of the doctor;  
 And this is a job that we often go a'ter  
 For ladies that choose to go into the water.'

And so at Mont Dore: sturdy Auvergnats, who figure as guides during the day, are to be seen during the early morning hours carrying off ladies, who

happily make no noisy opposition, to the baths. It is always amusing at a watering place, where inward as well as outward application of the healing fluid is practised, to study the trusting patients, who, having unbounded faith in the efficacy of the waters, convert their stomachs into cisterns, and imbibe tumbler after tumbler full, with a rapidity and perseverance at once amazing and alarming. The priestess of the waters here is no Naiad, if she be descended from Egeria, nor is her fountain enamelled by many-hued mosses. She has, however, numerous votaries: from early dawn, she is surrounded by applicants, each holding forth a glass, eager to have it filled from the ever-flowing spring. Origen tells us that his contemporaries believed warm springs to be fed by the hot tears of fallen angels; and who knows but that some of these lovely beings may even now be doing penance in the volcanic depths of Mont Dore. Bearing the brimming goblet, the patients walk to and fro under the portico, sipping and drinking until the dose is taken. Orders have been issued, I believe, that half an hour should elapse between each glass; but the invalids, real or soi-disant, appear to follow the practice of St. Laurent, the patron saint of the springs of Mont Dore, who, when half roasted, cried out to his torturers to turn him on the other side. A board over the portico carries the legend in the Auvergnat patois, running thus:—

Qui le bon San Laurent fugue mita grillia  
Didii bei le Bourré mouchu me faut vira,

which may be rendered :—

Quant le bon Saint Laurent fut a moitié grillé,  
Il dit au Bourreau—Monsieur, il faut me tourner !

and so may zealous water drinkers be seen taking large mouthfuls of the steaming spring, and turning their heads first to one side then to the other, in order to scald all portions of their œsophagus equally. The power of faith is great. There is a French gentleman here who is drinking, douching, vaporizing, and bathing at a furious rate. In the course of a few days I became acquainted with him. ‘They come and fetch me,’ he said, ‘at four in the morning; I am carried in a chair, swathed in flannel, to the baths, where I undergo the various aquatic operations until eight; then I am swathed in flannel again, carried back to my hotel, put to bed, where I remain until breakfast time.’ ‘And this by the advice of your physician?’ I inquired. ‘Not at all,’ he replied; ‘I felt unwell—oppressed—jaded—and so I consulted a somnambule in Paris: Go, said she, to Mont Dore, and take twenty-four baths, douches, &c. &c., and you will be restored to perfect health. So here I am, and though the medecin\* declares that my system will not bear douching, I am determined to persevere.’ And, indeed, his frame was so delicately conjointed, that I should have doubted its capability of bearing up

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\* A government physician resides at all the French watering-places, and no person can use the waters without consulting him, though his attendance during the course may be dispensed with.

against one of those fearful shocks produced by a douche. But faith has strength to remove mountains, and I dare say that the believing Frenchman reaped benefit by following the somnambule's advice.

There is no attempt at Mont Dore to emulate the elegance of the German brunnens. There are no delicately formed Bohemian glass goblets, no music; the want of the latter is certainly a great omission, for—

Music is wholesome, the doctors all think,  
For ladies who bathe and for ladies who drink,

and I strongly counsel the bath authorities to get up a band as soon as possible.

The excursions in the vicinity of Mont Dore are endless. An entire summer might be spent wandering from scene to scene, each presenting fresh objects of interest and beauty. M. Lecocq has written a large volume devoted entirely to them, but the work enters too much into detail for the tourist. To the sketcher from nature, Mont Dore will appear a paradise; my friend found ample work for his pencil, and I, though but a humble performer, shared his artistical enthusiasm.

Our second excursion was to the baths of La Bourboule, about eight miles from Mont Dore. We accompanied a very agreeable party, and were, as usual, mounted. We passed down the valley as far as the village of Quereihl, and crossing the Dordogne,



entered a grand and gloomy pine forest, through which we rode for two hours. A large clearing in the forest bears the name of the Salon Mirabeau. This is in true French taste. It appears that some relative of the statesman of that name, held meetings of the peasantry in the forest at the time of the great revolution, whence the space was called Salon Mirabeau. It is now much frequented by pic-nic parties, and a most charming spot it is for Watteau-like groups. The very trees seem endowed with love, giving evidence of the truth of old Burton's remark, who says, 'In vegetal creatures, what sovereignty love hath may be proved by many pregnant proofs and familiar examples;—you may oft see two trees bend, and, of their own accord, stretch out their boughs to embrace and kiss each other, thus giving manifest signs of mutual love.' And he cites Ammianus Marcellinus, who declares that 'trees marry one another, and fall in love if they grow in sight, and when the wind brings the smell to them they are marvellously affected.' Torrents speed through this pine forest, and the lover of waterfalls may feast his eyes on many

A sheeted silver waving column.

We turned aside to see two—one called Plat à Barbe, which our guide declared had only been discovered a couple of years ago; it is buried in the dark recesses of the forest, plunging down into a grim chasm. The only practicable method of seeing the

entire fall is to hook one arm round a sapling pine which grows on the verge of the precipice, and lean over. The other and finer fall which we saw was called La Vernière. The water comes down in two magnificent curves, with stunning noise, and is received in a large circular basin begirt with huge rocks, which, when the sun shines, is literally canopied by rainbows. Exquisitely delightful was our ride: for, indeed, it is almost impossible to conceive scenes of greater sylvan loveliness than the forest presented through which we passed. Emerging from it we saw La Bourboule in the valley beneath us, and soon entered the little hamlet. The name is significant of bubbling springs, and here they bubble up hotter than the hand can bear. One of our party claimed the medecin as an acquaintance, so we rode up to his door and dismounted. A fille who answered our inquiries stated that the doctor was at home, and showed us into a room, which, from the shutters being closed, seemed to us, after the glare of sunny noon, pitch dark. Presently we heard a voice proceeding from a corner, addressing our friend—‘Ah! je suis charmé de vous voir.’ The speaker saw us, though he was as yet invisible to us. ‘Pardonnez moi, je vous prie, messieurs,’ continued the speaker; ‘mais j’étais si fatigué.’ A spectral-like form glided across the floor—a shutter was thrown back, and then we beheld the government physician of La Bourboule in the simple and by no means superfluous drapery of his shirt. He accounted for his state of disha-

bille by telling us that he had been up since dawn attending to his patients, and was so exhausted and worn out, that he had lain down for a siesta. In a few minutes he had donned his garments, drawn the curtain across the recess, and ordered refreshment for us. Though shrouded by a rough exterior, the doctor's courtesy to us was very great. He treated us most hospitably; and when we had finished our luncheon, he showed us the springs. They issue at the junction of the volcanic tufa with the granite, which here appears near the surface of the ground, and discharge their water into tanks hewn out of the rock. In the course of constructing these, some Roman remains were discovered. The waters are considered efficacious in cases of rheumatism. M. Chaussy, so was the physician named, led us up a flight of steps to a door, opening into a room immediately over the baths. As he entered it he crossed himself. A rough-looking chest stood at the farther end of the apartment. 'This is our chapel,' he said; 'and there,' pointing to the chest, 'is the altar.' This was bringing cures for body and soul into very close contact. Before the adaptation of this room to the purposes of a chapel, religion was without a public home in La Bourboule. One of the curiosities of the place is a grotto hewn out of the rock, and tenanted by the woman who excavated it. She is proud of her performance; but the result of her toil, continued during three successive years, is a very dirty, stink-

ing sty, far more adapted for pigs than for human beings, and the life of the occupant must be one presenting the varieties only of dulness and the lowest pleasures.

The health-hunter, to whom the waters of La Bourboule are recommended, and it may be mentioned, that they are considered most remedial in chronic rheumatism, will find no temptations to turn aside from his lawful pursuit. The boarding-houses are of the most humble description, and nothing is attempted beyond the mere feeding and lodging of the guests. However, with books and horses, several weeks might be spent here, and enjoyed, provided that the beautiful scenery in the vicinity were duly appreciated.

We returned to Mont Dore by a different route, visiting La Roche des Fées and La Roche Vendeix. The former is associated with the mad pranks of the 'good people,' whose delicate foot-prints are pointed out on a rock, which is further remarkable for the great number of basaltic prisms imbedded in its bold summit. They produce a sensible and marked effect on the magnetic needle. The Roche Vendeix acquired an infamous celebrity in the fourteenth century, by having been selected as the stronghold of Aimerigot Marcel, popularly known as the Roi des Pillards. He formed an alliance with England against France, and faithfully carried it out, by becoming the most inveterate enemy to his country. At the head of a numerous troop of ruffians he deso-

lated the neighbourhood of his rocky castle, and was so daring and energetic that Froissart, who treats of his history, declares that 'nothing came amiss to him that was not too hot or too heavy.' No vestige of his den now remains; but so fantastically are the basaltic prisms grouped, that it is not difficult to imagine them to be a part of the castle towers of the robber chief.

The ride home was, if possible, even wilder and more charming than our outward route. In the depths of the forest, we came upon saw-mills of rudely picturesque construction. Curious to see how the peasants lived in these solitudes, I entered a cottage. It was a substantially built dwelling, containing two rooms; one, of large dimensions, appropriated to the human wants and requirements of its proprietor and family; the other, much smaller, devoted to the cattle. The family living-room presented many features of comfort. Along one side were four boxes containing beds: on another, a large fire-place, well garnished with pots and pans. From the ceiling hung ruddy-hued pig skins, distended with wine, and rows of rye bread, which, with vegetables, forms the staple food of the Auvergnats. Meat is rarely eaten. There is scarcely a cabin in the Mont Dore district where wine may not be had; and although the Englishman would doubtless prefer a tankard of foaming ale to the thin wine of la belle France, yet in hot summer time, a

bottle of vin du pays, with a crust of bread, is very acceptable.

There was an air of order and propriety in the peasants' abode, truly pleasant to contemplate. With advantages but little superior to those at the command of the Irish cottier, the Auvergnats are infinitely above him in the scale of civilization. No rags shock the eye—no bare feet are to be seen, and there is an appearance of comfort amongst them, which it would be vain to seek for in miserable Ireland.

It is exceedingly difficult to comprehend the Auvergnat patois, and as much so to make the people understand even the most simple phrases spoken in pure French. In all our distant excursions we were accompanied by a guide, which rendered us independent of the peasants; but I would counsel the tourist who prefers wandering alone, to learn a few rustic phrases applicable to the necessities of his excursion. He will find the Auvergnats rough, but honest, sturdy, and strong-limbed, well fashioned for their occupations of hewers of wood and drawers of water, which latter calling they monopolize in Paris.

The day of our excursion to La Bourboule was Sunday. In the evening the guests mustered strongly in the Salon, and indulged in an extra hour of cards and dancing. Great persuasions were used to make me join in these amusements, but the customs—prejudices, the French would call them—of England

were too deeply rooted within me, and I held out successfully, even against the entreaties of fair lips and sparkling eyes.

Another excursion of great interest which we made was to St. Nectaire. This requires a long day. We were on horseback at seven, and after sundry strappings and re-strappings of cloaks and portfolios, cantered down the valley, and turning to the right, ascended a steep mountain, called the Puy de Diane, over which our road lay. From the descent on the other side we saw the Château de Murol, which crowns a basaltic-capped hill. The ruined building has an imposing appearance, but no pretensions to the picturesque. We delayed visiting its interior until our return in the afternoon from St. Nectaire. The volcanic country between Murol and that village is exceedingly remarkable. The volcano of Tartaret, which rises near the castle, shows, even yet, traces of its once fearful activity. The entire district has been desolated by its fires. ‘The cone of this volcano,’ says Mr. Scrope, ‘is composed throughout of lava, scorix, lapilli, and fragments of granite. It has two deep and regular bowl-shaped craters, separated by a high ridge, and each broken down on one side. They have furnished together a very copious lava-current, which at first spreads over a wide and level surface, then contracting itself as the valley becomes narrower, occupies the channel of the former river, and follows all its sinuosities as far as Neckers, below

which it terminates, at a distance of thirteen miles from its origin.’\*

Smaller bubbles of the volcanic system, covered with basaltic scoriæ, rise to the height of between one hundred and two hundred feet, and stud the country in thick profusion, their bases almost touching each other. Amongst these the road winds, but in many places it is difficult to distinguish the path, so thickly is it strewn with fragments fallen from the hills. These render the footing for horses very insecure; and just as I was meditating on the chances of a fall, our guide, who was riding in advance, bit the dust in a very summary manner. His horse came down with a run, as sailors would say, but happily the accident proved of no greater inconvenience than delaying us for a few minutes. Very little of the country is capable of cultivation. Small patches of corn, scarcely larger than a tolerably-proportioned table-cloth, dot the valleys here and there, evidencing an unequal struggle with barren nature, which here refuses sustenance to all living things. The scene is, indeed, most striking; and its wonderful freshness, if this word may be applied to what is burnt and seared, is not one of its least extraordinary features. The lava seems to have just ceased flowing—the volcanos to have hardly stopped smoking; and gazing at the scene, it is easy to realize the words of the psalmist:—‘The earth trembled and quaked, the very foundations also of the hills shook,

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\* Geology of central France, p. 117.



and were removed; there went a smoke out in his presence, and a consuming fire out of his mouth, so that coals were kindled at it.' And when did these events, as applied to the scene before us, come to pass? The most shadowy traditions are utterly silent on the subject. Thousands of years, nay, hundreds of thousands have rolled away, yet here, in burning, one might almost say in shining, characters, the past is written as distinctly as if it had occurred but yesterday. Let no one who visits Clermont fail to see this part of Auvergne.

St. Nectaire is a small village rising out of the volcanic chaos. It is a ride of an hour and a half from Murol. On a commanding eminence stands a church of Romanesque architecture, dating, as is supposed, from the twelfth century. It includes a large and lofty nave, and two aisles; the eastern end terminates in three apses of great beauty. The capitals of the large and heavy pillars are carved with quaint subjects, scriptural and legendary. It is altogether a very remarkable edifice, and well worthy the attention of the antiquary. In the middle of the nave, on a tawdrily-decorated platform, stood images of the Virgin and Child, dressed in all the finery of a theatrical wardrobe. The day of our visit was the Feast of the Assumption, and hence this display. All the peasantry within walking distance had flocked to the church; the men, dressed in light drab frieze trousers and coat, trudged along in huge sabots, of dimensions sufficiently capacious to accommodate elephantine

feet. The women's costume presented no remarkable feature—beauty was wholly wanting. The great object of attraction was of course the Virgin; round her they clustered thick as bees, and brought, as offerings, bunches of grapes (rarities here), which they suspended, necklace-fashion, round the necks of the mother and child. A plate, placed at the feet of the Virgin, was half filled by sous cast in by the worshippers.

Near the church stands the once powerful castle of St. Nectaire, the abode of the famous Bishop of Le Puy, who made himself so conspicuous in the troubles of Le Velay, in the sixteenth century. Possessing an insurmountable repugnance to the shedding of human blood, he appeared in battle with a huge club, which he wielded with the vigour of a Hercules, to the discomfiture and prostration of his enemies. He had a sister who shared her brother's military ardour. Magdelaine de St. Nectaire, the proud and beautiful amazon, as she was styled, was no imaginary or ideal heroine. Half a hundred youthful chevaliers, *sans peur et sans reproche*, swore constant allegiance to her; and she was worthy of their devotion. For when the love of her early youth was quenched in the grave of her husband, Guy de Miremont, she vowed to live only for her oppressed country. Animated with the most profound zeal in this cause, she went forth, at the head of her soldiers, to do battle against the Seigneur de Montal, lieutenant of the king, in Haute-Auvergne, and defeated him. ‘Ventre

St. Gris!" exclaimed Henry of Navarre, when he heard of this gallant deed, 'if I were not king, I would be Magdelaine de St. Nectaire.'

The lizard plays now over the site of the castle, and tradition only marks its former vast extent.

There is a capital inn at St. Nectaire, of which I can speak from experience, having tested its restorative capabilities with much inward satisfaction. To the geologist who *picks* his way through the country, the Hôtel Meudon, by which dignified title the afore-said inn is known, would be most comfortable head quarters.

The landlady complained sadly of the want of customers. A large hotel, with its wide doors gaping all day, and its chambers desolate, is a dreary and melancholy spectacle. In England, St. Nectaire would be largely patronized. In France, it sees scarcely any tourists.

The hostess ascribed the absence of guests to the revolution, on whose broad and irresponsible shoulders she heaped all her reproaches. Here, as at Mont Dore, the peasants, in a moment of wild and impetuous enthusiasm, wrenched a sturdy pine tree from its mountain home, and planted it in the middle of the village, christening it the 'tree of Liberty,' and crowning it with flowery chaplets; they doubtless believed that with the Republic blessings innumerable would flow upon them, but with the decay of the tree perished their fond imaginings, and the prospects of the Republic are as dreary and desolate as the sapless

pine trees, which stand up as it were in mockery, like withered sticks, which indeed they are, in the villages of Auvergne.

There is a very perfect Druidical monument near St. Nectaire. It consists of one altar formed of large slabs of unhewn granite. If the people who reared these monuments had inscribed picture writings on the stones, how greatly would their interest be enhanced.

St. Nectaire possesses hot baths, and a spring even more valuable for its incrusting properties than that of St. Alyre at Clermont. The staple produce is basso-relievo portraits of the Duc de Bordeaux, whom the proprietor of the springs unhesitatingly promoted to Henri V.

On our return we visited the Castle of Murol. It is usual to dismount at the foot of the hill, but we charged up the steep, following the track of many an ancient knight, and passing through the crumbling gates, entered the large court-yard. Here we turned our horses loose to graze on the rich herbage, and, under the guidance of a female cicerone, explored the castle. The ruins are, like all remains of feudalism, of great massiveness. According to historians, the first trustworthy mention of the castle occurs in 1223, when its lord was Robert Chambe. It afterwards fell into the hands of the Cardinal de Murol, who gave his name to it. Grégoire de Tours speaks of it under the name of *Merotiacense Castrum*, and records various deeds of valour and barbarity enacted

within its grim walls. At one of the angles rises a huge tower, from whence a glorious view is obtained. Beneath, the country is seared and tortured into the most fantastic shapes, but afar to the south a dark blue mountain range appears, split into a thousand peaks, some of which have been hurled from the perpendicular by mighty convulsions. To the north-east gleams the Lake of Chambon, lovely in itself, and reflecting loveliness in the garb of hanging beech woods, which fringe the sides of the gorge of Chaudefour. At the extremity of this defile rise long, pointed, rocky needles; freaks of nature, which might be taken, at first sight, for a number of church spires. To the exploring of this gorge we resolved to devote an early day. The lover of dark places, dungeons, oubliettes, and all the mysteries appertaining to the strongholds of ancient power, will find the Castle of Murol a rich treat. To me these things are associated with painful thoughts. They tell eloquently of oppression and woe; showing that men, in times past, ruled, not mercifully, but in the full exercise of the sentiment, 'Let fear be over all.' The minds of our ancestors must, indeed, have been made of adamantine stuff, or more probably they were schooled to regard merciful feelings as fit to belong to woman alone. Else how could they have prolonged the merry banquet through midnight hours, knowing that their conquered and unhappy foe was pining in dungeons fathoms deep beneath them. I rejoice to see the grass waving over these monuments of cruelty,—

to see the free birds winging their flight among the nodding ruins. They tell of better days,—for let desponding social economists rave as they may, the world is more moral than it was three centuries ago.

Our ride home was long and tedious, and we were glad to wrap our mantles round us when passing over the elevated plateaux of the Puy de Diane.

## CHAPTER VI.

READER, if you be of Byron's opinion, that anglers are detestable creatures, and therefore to be detested by the reasonable portion of humanity, if not actually tortured,\* you will do well to skip this chapter; for I give you fair and honest warning that it is my intention to devote it entirely to my piscatorial adventures at Mont Dore. I think that my brothers of the angle will thank me for so doing. For should they follow my advice, and spend a summer in wandering through Auvergne, they will be glad to have a few hints respecting the capabilities of the rivers and lakes of that province. Mr. Murray's guide book is not wholly silent on the subject. The compiler thereof—or of the Auvergne portion of it—if no angler, is at least fully aware of the excellence of trout; for he tells us, in more than one place, that the rivers and lakes in Auvergne furnish delicately-flavoured trout, but he is wholly silent as to the best means of capturing them.

However, I felt obliged for the information; and

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\* And angling, too, that solitary vice,  
 Whatever Izaak Walton sings or says;  
 The quaint old cruel coxcomb in his gullet  
 Should have a hook and a small trout to pull it!

DON JUAN.

as soon as I had determined on visiting Auvergne, I resolved to take my fishing-tackle. Nor had I reason to repent doing so; for though my fishing exploits fell far short of those recorded by anglers in Scotland, yet I derived considerable amusement from them.

To the humble individual who has not the good fortune to claim acquaintance with the land-and-water aristocracy of England, the lakes and rivers of France will be pleasant places. On their shores, he need not apprehend being warned off by the rough voice of some game-preserving Cerberus, provided that he use no more deadly apparatus than rod and line. For, although the French propriétaires have the right to keep their land free from trespassers, yet they are so numerous, and their holdings so small, that the angler is never prevented following his pastime. The French Fishing Laws—which, I understand, have not been altered by the new republican government—contain the following article:—

‘It is permitted to every individual to fish, with a *floating line held in the hand*, in the waters, rivers, lakes, and canals, the times of spawning excepted.’

Thus the angler in France may roam freely from stream to stream as he wills, provided that, in the pursuit of his sport, he respect the law.

To me there are few circumstances more annoying and pleasure-destroying in a day’s fishing, than to be accompanied by a gamekeeper, who, for the ostensible purpose of landing your fish, adheres to your side



like a leech during the entire day. The angler will soon be made aware that he has other duties to perform, besides those connected with the landing net. I was fishing, a few summers ago, in the waters of a famous English river, preserved by a gentleman who accorded me permission. The day was most auspicious for sport; and though anglers are generally as much disposed to grumble against weather as farmers, on this occasion the most fastidious would have held his peace. The river, I was assured, abounded in trout; so I put my rod together under pleasant anticipations of success. Softly fell my fly at the tail of a promising stream, and quick as thought was it seized by a fine fish. In a few minutes the speckled beauty was in the net, from whence I expected to see him transferred to the creel. But his good fortune interposed: the gamekeeper drew forth from his capacious pockets a weighing machine, declared the captive one ounce short of the proper weight, and threw him back to his watery home. Reader—and now I may address *you* as a dear brother of the angle—do you remember the size and shape of a two-pound trout wanting one ounce? Of course you do. Well, you must confess that it costs a pang to part with such a prize. My trout was not in the situation of those described by Gomesius, who declares, in his ‘*De Sale*,’ that ‘*Pisces ob amorem marcescunt pallescunt, &c.*’—he was a fine fat fish, giving no outward indication whatever of having been

crossed in love. ‘And so,’ said I, to my attendant, ‘no one is allowed to kill a trout *under* two pounds in your master’s preserves?’ ‘No, sir,’ was his reply. ‘And pray,’ I continued, ‘are there many fish above that weight in the waters?’ The fellow grinned, and replied, ‘Not many, I believe, sir.’ As far as my experience of that day went, there was not one. I caught upwards of two dozen trout, but no single fin did I bring home; not one being entitled to the weighty honour of appearing at table.

Now, who but the easiest-going Cockney, who, sitting in a velvet-cushioned arm-chair in a punt, calls it fishing, would give one farthing for such a day’s angling as I have described?

Give me, rather, a thousand times, the freedom of the mountain stream, where, though the trout be small, one is left unconstrained and at liberty to mingle one’s spirit with the rushing waters, or become a part of the exquisite scenery through which the burn will lead you, with its playful and soul-soothing babble.

The angler must not expect large trout in Auvergne—two pound weights would be rarely wanted. The average size of the fish is half a pound. In the lakes they run somewhat heavier. Fly-fishing in France is almost unknown—certainly it is very seldom practised. At Mont Dore, where, at the time of my sojourn, there were some three hundred men with nothing to do but to bathe in the morn and amuse themselves during the day, not one possessed a rod,

or, as far as I could learn, had ever fished. And yet trout were at the table-d'hôte daily. These were caught in the Lac de Guéry, about an hour's ride from the baths, by means of nets. The use of flies, natural or artificial, was utterly unknown; and when it became noised about that Monsieur l'Anglais had strange lures wherewith to catch trout, several gentlemen waited on me to inspect my rod, line, and fishing-book. With the contents of the latter they were greatly taken, and no skulking Indian savage ever examined the dress of an European with more curiosity or minuteness than my French friends manifested in examining the dressing of my flies. There was one individual, whom I had observed for some days poking his nose into every hole and corner, asking questions of everybody, and enacting the part of Paul Pry. It turned out that he purposed giving the French public the benefit of his observation, and that he was collecting matter to compile a small guide-book to the baths of Mont Dore. Some good-natured friend acquainted him of my angling pursuits, and advised him to learn from me how I caught trout. So one evening, as I was sitting in the gloaming on the parapet-wall before the hotel, swinging my legs, like a couple of pendulums, to and fro, and musing, I was accosted by the guide-book maker, who, doffing his hat, and bowing low, prayed that I would pardon him; but having heard that I was possessed of an infallible and most ingenious method of catching trout, he would feel

infinitely obliged if I would show him my contrivances. I led him upstairs to my apartment, and laid before him my slender stock, of what Burton styles ‘pretty devices and sleights for fishing.’ Brother angler, fancy the profound ignorance of this man—he was a Parisian, had lived thirty-five years in Paris, and not only had he never seen an artificial fly, but had never heard of one! He must have had Plutarch early whipped into him, or that part of his writings in which he says—‘*Omnino turpis piscatio, nullo studio digna, illiberalis credita est; quod nullum habet ingenium, nullam perspicaciam.*’ But he was delighted with all that I showed him. He would, with my permission, publish my information in his guide—it would form a most important feature in the book—it would, in short, set everybody fishing at Mont Dore. He promised to send me a copy of his work, which was to have been published during the past winter. I greatly regret that it has not reached me ere writing these pages, for I strongly apprehend that the chapter on fishing would yield merry matter for my chapter on the same subject.

When it became known that I intended making an angling excursion to the Lac de Guèry, several friends expressed a wish to accompany me. The day was fixed,—but for a wonder, the morning broke loweringly—mists wreathed the Pics, and a drizzling rain descended. It was the only wet day that we had in Auvergne. For fishing, however, it was far from unpropitious, and I made my arrange-

ments for the excursion. But my friends had no angling ardour. The bare idea of a wetting frightened them out of their wits; and seeing that arguing the point would be quite unavailing, I consented to postpone the excursion until the following day, and devoted the interval to epistolary instead of angling lines:—of course it cleared up at noon, and the morning was followed by an afternoon as favourable as the angler could desire.

The next day dawned cloudless. My French friends were in raptures—being *too fine* for fishing was more than they could understand. We rode to the Lac, ascending steep mountains backed by the Puy Gros, up rocky paths which are the channels of winter torrents. A rough ride it was; but we were a merry party, and the laugh and the joke were seldom unheard. How the spirits rise as we ascend these sky-dwelling mountains—it is as if the slough of care and sorrow were cast off on the plains.

The Lac de Guèry is situated in the centre of a plateau, about 4000 feet above the sea level. It is startling at such an elevation to see so large a piece of water. It occupies the crater of a volcano, and as it may puzzle some readers to know how it happens that water reposes so calmly in the lap of fire, it may be mentioned as a solution subscribed to by geologists, that when the volcano became tranquil, the fine trachytic ashes united with the rain water, and formed a tenacious clay, which has become the bed of several lakes in Auvergne. How trout got into these waters

is not so easily explained ; suffice it for our present purposes that they are there. As we approached the sedgy shores of the lonely mere, we descried fishermen setting nets, a sight far from agreeable to an angler with the artificial fly. We rode round the lake to the scene of their operations, and as we reached the spot, they ran their skiff into a little sandy creek and landed. They were two sturdy Auvergnats, amphibious, fishy-looking fellows, with wild streaming locks, and garments fringed with slimy weeds.

Though conversing with each other in patois, one was sufficiently learned in purer French to maintain a conversation with me. To him I expressed my intention of fishing with an artificial fly. I might as well, however, have said with an elephant, for he utterly ignored such a mode of angling. Both men manifested great curiosity whilst I was putting my rod together, and when they saw the flies, nothing could exceed their astonishment. To catch trout with such affairs appeared to them so utterly impossible, that they shook their heads incredulously at the very idea. One went in quest of worms and grasshoppers to place on the hooks, while the other proffered corks to serve as floats, that I might know when the fish bit.

It was evident that the trout were wholly unaccustomed to the fascination of an artificial fly, and it was doubtful whether they would rise at all to one. The water was rather dark, and, observing the *Cryptis* and *Phryganea* flies on the shores of the lake, I put up their imitations, which are known to anglers

under the names of Orange and Cinnamon flies. This done, one of the fishermen undertook to row me in his skiff to that part of the lake which had not been disturbed by the nets. Two of my French friends accompanied me,—there was no room in the tiny boat for a more numerous cargo.

We paddled out to the centre of the lake, and allowing the boat to drift shorewards, I cast my flies on the water. ‘Devouring Ephemerals!’ said I, in the words of Christopher North, addressing the scaly inhabitants of the crystalline caves beneath, ‘here be insects savoury exceedingly, carrying *sauce piquante* in their tails. Do try the taste of this bobber; but either of the two you please.’ There was a crisp curl on the lake, and the flies moved on the water with life-like resemblance. At the third cast—there is luck in odd numbers—I rose a fish; all doubts were removed; the trout were like their British brethren, capable of being lured by English flies. The eyes of all in the boat were now on me. ‘Do you see,’ said I to my friends, ‘that little islet of floating weeds? Well, if I am not greatly mistaken, you will see a trout rise near it.’ I swept the line round my head and brought my flies light as a feather on the lake. The waters were severed by a silver-like wedge, that came shooting upwards; a movement of the wrist—indescribable, and only to be acquired by practice,—rivetted the fish to my line, and, in a couple of minutes, the trout—for it was one—was caged in my landing net. ‘C’est étonnant!’ said one of the French gentle-

men. ‘*Sacré nom de D——!*’ exclaimed the fisherman; ‘*d’attraper une truite comme ça avec rien!*’ for the feathery dressings of the hook went for nothing with him. My capture, however, was not large; in certain English waters he would have been speedily restored to his element, for he hardly weighed one pound. Here he was deemed fully entitled to the honour of promotion to Madame Bertrand’s table-d’hôte, where he and certain of his brethren duly appeared, to their great renown, and the entire satisfaction of the guests.

Not many minutes elapsed ere I caught a second trout about the same size as the first; and I was becoming keenly interested in my sport, when, looking up, I beheld a large cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen on the opposite shore, who had ridden from Mont Dore to witness my operations. They hailed the boat, and requested us to row to them. We did so, and landed among them. Highly amusing it was to hear the descriptions given by my companions of the *modus operandi* of fly-fishing. If laid down as laws, they would not a little amaze members of the famous angling clubs in the vicinity of London.

I was not sorry when my friends left me. The attractions of trout fishing were not proof against the stronger temptations of the table-d’hôte; and as the hour of five drew near, they departed. Sweet are my recollections of that evening spent on the solitary lake. Not a human habitation was in sight, and as the hours advanced—



The sky an azure field displayed,  
'Twas sunlight sheathed and gently charmed,  
Of all its sparkling rays disarmed,  
And as in slumber laid.

The rough fisherman was never tired of rowing me to and fro; he loved to see the trout rise, which they did more and more eagerly as the evening darkened. But the reader will ask, had he forgotten his nets? Not so. The practice is to set them in the morning, and draw them in at dusk. They are then again set, and taken up several times during the night. Large quantities of trout are thus captured: and when daylight dawns, the fishermen hang up their nets to dry, draw their boat on shore, and one trudges over the mountains to Mont Dore, with a large box on his back full of the finny delicacies. The trout in this lake are what the French call *bien saumonée*; that is, they cut red, and their flesh is indeed very salmony in appearance. The river trout are greatly inferior. I have stated that any individual is allowed to fish with a line. To fish with nets, it is necessary to purchase permission from the commune. The right of using nets in Lake Guèry was vested in these two fishermen, who pay one hundred francs annually for the privilege of fishing from the 1st of May to the 15th of October.

I was warned by the deepening shades, that it was high time for me to wind up my line, for descending an Auvergne mountain, on horseback, is no pleasant feat in the dark. I had turned my horse loose to graze in the morning, and

so well had he taken care of himself, that I found him musing under a tree, with so aldermanic a paunch that all my attempts to effect a union between the tongue and buckle of the girth were abortive. The fishermen steadied the saddle while I mounted; and giving them a gratuity, which they assured me was wholly unnecessary, as a souvenir, I rode gingerly down the mountain, my rod in one hand, and my landing-net, full of trout, in the other. As I shall not again intrude my piscatorial adventures in Auvergne on the reader, I shall conclude this chapter with a few hints respecting angling in that part of France. For the rivers, which are for the most part of Scotch burn dimensions, a light rod will answer, but for the lakes, a heavier one will be found desirable. These sheets of water occupy very elevated positions, and are liable to be visited by stormy winds, when a light rod would be almost useless. I need scarcely say that the tourist must come provided with every description of tackle, for he will not find a single article to meet his requirements in the country. In Paris, flies are sold, but they are unworthy the name, and are libels on the species, and not for one moment to be compared to our London manufacture. I found during the month of August, a red hackle, of middling size, the most useful fly; but the trout took, also, the dun, and blue-bottle, though not so freely. A landing-net is an essential article, but a small one will suffice, as the angler will rarely form the acquaintance of a trout above two pounds. An Indian-rubber water-

proof fishing-coat should not be forgotten; for when it does rain on the Auvergne mountains, it descends with an earnestness of purpose unknown to Thames bob-fishing men. It may be you are a philosopher, caring not a fig for a wetting, and arguing that rain in the pocket is like money in that of spendthrifts, and cannot abide there. I shall not pause to dispute the point, but merely advise you to lay aside such philosophy, and wrap yourself in one of Cording's waterproofs.

## CHAPTER VII.

TRUE to my purpose, the last chapter wandered not from its legitimate subject. But there are scenes close to the Lake Guèry, which will well repay the tourist for his trouble in climbing to them; one, in particular, undoubtedly among the most striking in Auvergne. At the entrance of a long valley, whose vista fades in the horizon, and the head of which terminates near the plateau, cradling the Lake Guèry, stand two colossal pyramids, known by the names of Les Roches Tuillière et Sanadoire. They tower to the height of three hundred feet, and have the appearance of huge monsters guarding the valley. The structure of these rocks is phonolite or columnar feldspar, divided into very regular prisms. Those of the Sanadoire radiate in many places from a common centre. The prisms of la Tuillière are vertical, or nearly so, and on the north side are easily severed into thin lamellæ. The plates are used for roofing purposes, and hence the name of this rock. M. Lecocq says of these rocks:—  
 ‘ Toutes deux présentent des divisions prismatiques extrêmement remarquable. Ces collonades naturelles, que l’on désigne dans des descriptions pittoresques sous le nom de chaussées ou pavé des géans, se pré-

sentent ici dans de telles proportions qu'on ne peut les comparer qu'aux plus magnifiques points de vue de ce genre que l'on rencontre en Ecosse. La Roche Tuillière a des prismes qui ressemblent à d'immenses colonnes, qui d'un seul jet, s'élèvent du terre et se réunissent en un sommet pointu et difficilement accessible. On peut cependant y parvenir du côté opposé à la vallée, mais ce n'est qu'en tremblant qu'occupant un espace aussi circonscrit, on ose mesurer des yeux le précipice effrayant, qui sépare ces deux roches. Non seulement la Tuillière présente à la vallée une face tout à fait verticale, mais son sommet surplombe, et offre aux aigles qui vont des Alpes aux Pyrénées un point de repos dont ils se profite souvent.'

Here we have a vein of French sentimentality cropping out from the dry surface of geological detail. The eagles, however, are not imaginary adjuncts to the picture, for they are to be seen in the neighbourhood of Mont Dore, but I cannot answer for the truth of their flight from the Alps to the Pyrenees.

The French are certainly great lovers of sentiment. The Parisian gentleman, who was engaged in compiling a guide to Mont Dore, gave a sketch of a scene which he purposed laying at the site of the pretty and rather inaccessible waterfall of the Plat à Barbe, which, as I have stated, can only be seen by clinging to the trunk of a pine tree. He was not aware of the existence of this fall, and when I described it to him, he clapped his hands and exclaimed, 'Ah!

écoutez, c'est délicieux ! I will make one of your beautiful countrywomen on the point of falling into the abyss, when she shall be rescued by a handsome young guide, with whom she shall fall in love !

If the visitor to Mont Dore be limited in the time at his disposal, and cannot spare more than a few days, let him not forget to visit the Gorge de Chaudefour. I think that excursion will astonish him. Accompanied by a guide, we were in our saddles at an early hour of a most lovely morning, and left the baths for that destination long before the company had completed their bathing and sudatory processes. On lengthy and arduous excursions, the guides at Mont Dore expect to be furnished with a horse ; but as the two animals, biped and quadruped, cost less than a Swiss guide, the tourist will not grudge paying for the extra horse. I say nothing of the honour of having a mounted attendant.

On clearing the hamlet, we ascended the face of the mountain impending over it, by a Gemmi-like zig-zag. The views of the valley, closed in by the bizarre volcanic domes and cones, were highly striking and picturesque. The peaks in the line of our march were clothed nearly to their summits by pine forests, intermingled with ash and beech.

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— The pyramids  
Of the tall pine-trees' overarching frame,  
Most solemn domes within, and far below,  
Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,  
The ash and the acacia hang  
Tremulous and pale.

On attaining the summit, we came upon an extensive plateau, clothed with long wiry grass, and chequered by lovely flowers, among which clouds of purple butterflies were toying. Far different is the scene when winter casts his snowy mantle over the mountain heights. Our route was marked by a series of posts, twenty feet high; according to our guide, they are sometimes entirely buried beneath the snow. For two hours we rode over the plateau, cantering when the ground permitted,—for the horses of Mont Dore, unlike the mules of Switzerland, are capable of being persuaded into quicker paces than a monotonous walk. On coming to the extremity of the plateau, the valley of Chambon appeared at a great distance below, opening out at one extremity into the lake of the same name, and narrowing at the other into the Gorge de Chaudefour, which is terminated by the majestic Puy Ferrand. Although I had much confidence in the legs of my steed, which had borne me safely through many arduous excursions amongst the mountains, yet the path to the depths beneath was of so precipitous a nature, that I preferred, on this occasion, trusting to my own legs. Indeed, all our party dismounted, leaving the horses free to shuffle down the precipices as they willed. Arrived at the bottom, we mounted and scampered up the valley. Never shall I forget the singular spectacle that the sides of the Puy Ferrand presented. They literally bristled with huge rocky obelisks—Titanic sphynxes, guarding the awful solitudes from

human molestation. Some sprung from dense forests, which clothed the lower half of the mountain; others reared their fantastic forms from the naked rock. Our first object was to select a spot to sketch the remarkable scene. This done, when I completed my sketch, which was of very humble pretensions, compared to that of my companion, I sat gazing at the dim shadowy heights and giddy precipices before me, wrapped in the sublimity of the scene. Then came strange and ardent longings to penetrate the concealed secrets of those mountain fastnesses—to measure with my eye the depths of those vertical walls, that towered thousands of feet above me—to sit alone in those still solemn wilds, filled with feelings

And thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls;

to, in short, ascend this apparently inaccessible side of the Puy Ferrand, and descend on the other side to Mont Dore. I was further moved to this adventure by reading in M. Lecocq's work on this district, the following extract referring to this pass, which it seems he accomplished without a guide. He had already scaled a considerable height. 'Enfin il fallut m'y resoudre, je profitai des fissures du rocher, et surtout des arbrisseaux dont les racines s'y trouvaient solidement fixées. Si l'une d'elle se fut arrachée, si une branche s'était rompue, ma perte était certaine, une précipice effrayante était sous mes pieds, je voyais à plus de mille pieds de profondeur ce gazon que



j'avais foulé le matin, et ces arbres sous lesquels j'étais si tranquillement assis.'

After describing his difficulties, he concludes:—  
'Je descendis enfin au Mont Dore, me promettant bien de recommander aux personnes qui voudraient visiter le beau vallon de Chaudefour de prendre un guide qui connaissent bien ce Canton, et tous les mauvaises endroits.' There was, therefore, a pass over the Puy to Mont Dore, of that there could be no doubt—the difficulty consisted in effecting it. When the desire to climb the mountain was strong upon me, our guide was not with us. He had driven the horses to a distant pasture, and had himself gone to a hamlet, situated some miles lower down the valley; therefore, I had nothing to hope from his guidance; but, indeed, from questions which I had put to him, I felt pretty certain that he had never crossed the pass, and was ignorant of its position. My friend made every endeavour to dissuade me from the undertaking, dwelling strongly on the hazards and uncertainties of it; but I heeded not his remonstrances, having made up my mind to attempt the passage.

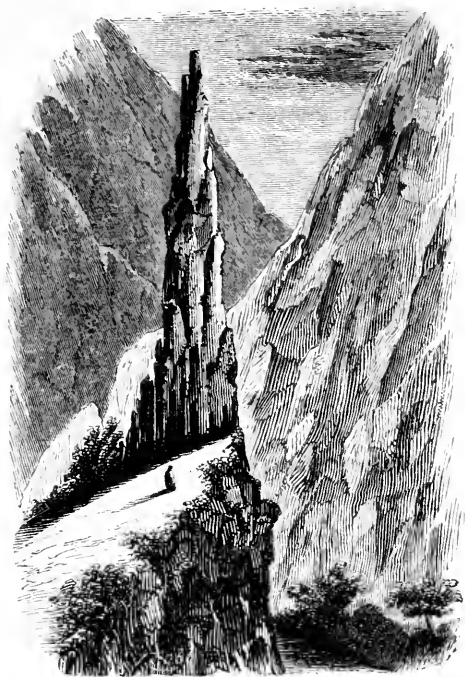
I was not well shod for the undertaking; for as I had no prospect when I started from Mont Dore of walking, I had put on a pair of thin-soled boots and spurs. I divested my heels of the latter—which, I may here observe, will be found great auxiliaries to the equestrian comfort of the tourist in Auvergne—and giving them to my friend, who had some hours'

sketching before him in the valley, told him that if I did not return in two hours, he might conclude that I had ascended the pass, and that the guide was to conduct my horse back to Mont Dore.

It was a little after two o'clock when I started. My course, at first, lay across an expanse of upland pasture, which gradually gave place to a forest covering the roots and sides of the mountains. Into this forest I plunged, my only bearings being the huge needles, which towered aloft to a stupendous height. There was no path, and the branches and underwood were so interlaced and entangled, that progress became exceedingly difficult. The lines of Milton forcibly recurred to me as most appropriate to the scene :—

A steep wilderness, whose hairy sides  
With thicket overgrown, grotesque and wild,  
Access denied; and overhead up grew,  
Insuperable height of loftiest shade,  
A sylvan scene; and as the ranks ascend,  
Shade above shade, a woody theatre  
Of stateliest view.

Pushing upwards, I at length attained a kind of sloping plateau, destitute of trees, which formed one side of the base of the largest of the rocky spires. Along this I walked, until I was fairly arrested by the rock, which rose vertically before me, while on either side of me were precipices of about one hundred feet, their bases steeped in a sea of forest verdure. This, in short, was my not very enviable position.



At this juncture I was on the point of abandoning the enterprise, for the mountain rose so precipitously above me, and the rocks frowned so grimly, that I could not discover any practicable route; however, the nil-desperandum fit of adventure came again strongly over me, and retracing my steps, I dashed once more into the forest in another direction, following a ravine, which served as a water-course for the winter torrents. For upwards of an hour did I worm my way through the dense woods, ascending gradually.

The heat was exceedingly oppressive, and I willingly subscribed to M. Lecocq's opinion, which originated under circumstances similar to those in which I was situated, that the gorge derives its name of *Chaud-four* from *Four Echauffé*. When at length I emerged from the woods, I found myself on the side of the mountain, which rose almost vertically; fortunately it was clothed with long grass, relieved by the pink crocus and dark blue iris; clinging to these by my hands, I pushed upwards, but the steepness was so great, that I was obliged to pause every ten minutes to regain my breath. Thus I toiled for an hour-and-a-half, enjoying, as I ascended, superb views of the extraordinary convulsed regions around me. The rocky spires, which seen from below assumed the form of detached obelisks, now appeared like huge leaves, standing out at right angles from the mountain side. Their height was prodigious; and some impended, in so threatening a manner, that it was difficult for philosophy to be heard in favour of the chances against their crashing downwards upon me. As I approached the mountain summit, the black precipices of basalt and breccia wore a most formidable appearance. Stern, indeed, was the wilderness that surrounded me. On each side rose two jagged peaks, between which I thought the col, or passage of the mountain, must be situated. The doubts which assailed me on this point were my chief trouble. For now that I had mastered so much, to abandon the undertaking

would have been most vexatious. More than two hours had elapsed since I started, so that my horse was probably already journeying homewards, and to have followed him would have involved a walk of fourteen miles.

Dr. Johnson has said, that the traveller amidst such scenes as were now around me, 'has not the tranquillity, but the horrors of solitude.' The absence of sound has a particularly awing effect in high mountainous regions. Mighty monuments—wrecks of fair-formed nature—were heaped in chaotic confusion on all sides. The whirlwind should have roared amongst them—and yet all was silent as the grave. I strained my aching senses expecting sounds to fill up the void. My panting breath seemed out of place amidst the breathless silence, and I more than once imagined that the terrible stillness was but the prelude of some great catastrophe.

Now stirs the feeling infinite, so felt  
In solitude, when we are least alone,  
A truth which through our being then doth melt  
And purifies from self.

I took out my glasses, and closely examined the precipices above and around me. Their height struck no fear into me; but I eagerly sought for some chasm which would permit me to climb them. There was no vestige of a path. An Indian would have been baffled to discover the trail of any being in these wilds. Marking some conspicuous objects in the long serrated ridges that crowned the mountain, I climbed

cautiously upwards in their direction. Hopes and fears rapidly succeeded each other, as I surmounted the dizzy heights. I knew that I must be near the top, and already I began to congratulate myself on my success, when I was stopped by a basaltic wall, about twenty feet in height, so vertical and smooth as to render any attempt to surmount it utterly out of the question. I followed its base, trusting to find a break. It was really fearful to look down the long ridges of inclined strata, which dipped into dark abysses, many hundreds of feet below me. My footing was now reduced to a ledge about six inches wide. The aspect of my fortunes began seriously to alarm me ; and, to heighten the horrors of my position, the afternoon was rapidly fading into evening. At last I came to a spot where the wall retreated at a sharp angle, beyond which it presented a comparatively easy mode of ascent. I saw in a moment, that if I could turn this corner, I should be able to overcome apparently the sole remaining obstacle to my ascent of the Puy Ferrand.

I think that I must have spent fully ten minutes in devising and considering how I could best plant my feet and hands to effect this passage. When my mind was made up how to act, I withdrew my eyes from the precipice beneath, and clinging to the sharp projections of the rock with vice-like tenacity, which were to me the ‘*coignes of vantage*,’ I wormed my way round the angle, and in a few minutes had the inexpressible satisfaction of standing on broad, safe ground.

Had the ribbon-like ledge given way, I should never have lived to write this adventure. I have traversed many ugly places in the Alps and Pyrenees, where the mountains have been robed in ice and snow, but I do not remember any *mauvais pas* so terrific as that which I have described. M. Lecoq, in the extract from his work which I have printed, alludes to some such formidable obstacle, but he appears to have derived considerable assistance from trees and shrubs, neither of which existed at that part of the precipice which I traversed.

The remainder of the ascent was an easy affair, in comparison to what I had accomplished. In two hours and three quarters from the time I left the verge of the forest, I stood on the summit of the Puy Ferrand, which is 6094 feet high, an elevation but slightly under that of its neighbour, the Pic de Sancy.

I threw myself on the ground, greatly overcome by fatigue. All my previous excursions having been equestrian, my legs were not well educated for walking, and I would strongly advise those of my readers who may be tempted to essay this passage, to prepare themselves by a few good marches for the undertaking. I say nothing respecting the expediency of securing the services of a guide, as the reader will have seen ere this, that the advice of M. Lecoq (who has strong claims to be styled the Saussure of Auvergne,) on this head, is deserving of attention. But I may mention, in confirmation of this, that a

shepherd whom I met on my descent to Mont Dore, told me that had I taken a course about a hundred yards to the right of that which I had selected, I should have avoided the *mauvais pas* which so nearly proved fatal to the success of my exploit, and have come upon a breach in the Roche Cuzeau, up which I might have clambered with comparative facility. Is it that heaven, that mysterious dwelling-place of pure, unalloyed happiness, where the Christian dares to assign the habitation of Jehovah, is nearer to us, when we stand on the mountain-top,—that we feel lifted spiritually, as well as physically, out of this world, which shall perish as a scroll, and brought more into communion with eternity? All nations, throughout all ages, who have bowed to a mighty spirit with whom is life eternal, have felt this. Thus the poet sings—

Not vainly did the early Persian make  
His altar, the high places, and the peak  
Of earth, o'ergazing mountains, and thus take  
A fit and unwall'd temple, there to seek  
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak  
Uprear'd of human hands; come, and compare  
Columns and idol dwellings—Goth or Greek—  
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,  
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe the prayer.

And it is well to remember, that the most impressive doctrines of our Saviour were delivered, not *in the Temple*, but *on the Mount*.

The mountain summits of Auvergne are singularly eloquent of the works of God. There, perhaps more than elsewhere, have we evidences of his power. At



amazing heights have been discovered fossil remains of gigantic extinct terrestrial and marine\* animals, médailles incontestables du deluge, as Fontenelle was the first to call these vestiges.†

I was steeped in thoughts of other worlds, when my spirit was recalled to its mundane home by a rushing sound which I heard above me. Looking up, I saw, within twenty yards of my lair, a magnificent eagle, sweeping, with wide-spreading wings, through the ether. He was, perhaps, as startled as myself; little expecting to behold so unusual a sight as man on these lofty peaks. But true to the majesty of his nature, he manifested no fluttering spirit, but sailed majestically down the

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\* The most remarkable discovery of fossil bones in Auvergne was between Champeix and Issoire, on an elevated platform, two thousand feet above the sea. The platform is composed of a bed of alluvial matter, overlaid by masses of trachytic breccia, and capped by basalt. In this alluvial bed the bones of no less than twenty extinct species of gigantic mammalia were found, several of which were pronounced by Cuvier to be new. Besides the mammalia, several bones of birds and impressions of fish were discovered. See *Bulletin des Sciences*, 1824. Sir Charles Lyell, in a paper read before the Geological Society, in 1845, on the lava currents of Auvergne, states that, independently of the remains of fossil animals, forty-three species found imbedded in the lava current flowing from the Puy de Tartaret have been brought to light, all closely allied to recent animals, yet nearly all of them showing some points of difference. Sir Charles Lyell conceives it highly probable that these animals may have been drowned by floods which accompanied the earthquakes and eruptions by which the Puy de Tartaret was formed.

† See his *Eloge of Leibnitz*, a charming composition.

mountain slope, without a deviation from his trackless course.

When my limbs were somewhat rested, I set forth on my downward journey. It was a great relief to have muscles brought into play which had long been idle, at the expense of others, and I sprung down the mountain steep with the lightness of a goat. In the course of an hour I fell into the path leading from Mont Dore to the Pic de Sancy. There my adventure terminated, for the remainder of my walk homewards was beaten ground. I paused at the brink of the infantine bubbling Dordogne to bathe my feet, which were somewhat bruised and sore. Then, refreshed and invigorated, I took my way down the valley, and arrived in the gloaming at the baths.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I FOUND myself somewhat of a lion when my passage of the Puy Ferrand became known at Mont Dore. No one, according to the guides, had effected it alone except M. Lecocq, and considerable curiosity was manifested to know how I had accomplished it. The fact that it was utterly impracticable for horses was quite sufficient to deter the most adventurous from attempting it, although I was loud in my praise of the magnificent and wonderful scenery which it unfolds.

It was surprising to witness the total absence of enterprise among the gentlemen visitors at the Baths. If the day was a little warmer than usual, even a ride was deemed too serious an exertion, and the hours were spent lying *à l'ombre* beneath the trees.

There was one lady at our hotel capable of great deeds, but who, being bound in the chains of matrimony, had less way than will. She had not been many days among us, ere she rendered herself very conspicuous by her *bizarrierie* and love of adventure and admiration; not that I instance the latter as a singularity in her as a woman, but it was indulged in so deeply as to make her quite ridiculous.

I know not what illusions her mirror may have reflected into her soul respecting her features, but certainly they were not such as to cause a man to pass a sleepless night thinking of them. Her eyes triumphed most, yet this moment I am unable to satisfy the reader's curiosity respecting their colour; this omission is, however, of little consequence, for, after all, as the admirer of women will readily admit, it is not the colour, but the spirit and soul within, that makes the eye beautiful. Looking at, or rather into, her eyes, I thought of the truthfulness of the expression 'stag-eyed,' which Lady Wortley Montague applied to Turkish beauties, as conveying a very lively image of the fire and animation of the eyes of those ladies. Madame B—— had stag-eyes, large and full, like two twin lamps, burning brightly beneath dark, arched eyebrows. Marmontel, who was a great admirer of fine eyes, would perhaps, had he seen those of our friend, have applied to her the lines which he addressed to the Duchesse de Bouillon :

*Peut-on s'ennuyer dans ces lieux,*

*Honorés par vos pas, éclairés par vos yeux ;*

and this brings me to the other great points of Madame B——'s person. These were her hands and feet; of which she was greatly proud, and with considerable justice. The former were fit for a sculptor's model—long and delicate, terminating in slender up-turned rosy fingers; the latter reminded one of Ariosto's happy description :—

*Il breve, asciutto, e ritondetto piede ;*

not that they were unnaturally short, for, as an excellent painter of beautiful and well-formed women has said—‘It is better to have the sentiment of grace in a foot, than a forced or unnatural smallness.’ Those flowing lines of beauty which give so peculiar a charm to a perfect foot, cannot exist in one too short for its breadth. The feet of Madame B—— were fully as beautiful as her hands, and she knew it. This was apparent by the constant opportunities that she gave us of studying their faultless proportions. Of course they were dressed in the best taste. A Parisian lady rarely errs in this respect. The boot was cut in the most elegant style—the shoe sandalled in the most graceful curves.

But her vanity was fated to receive a check. Among the guests at our hotel was a French gentleman, with a shrivelled liver, who had recently left Havana, and had been sent from Paris to the baths. Though infirm, and debilitated by long residence in a tropical climate, he was young in years, and fully sensible of the charms of beauty. For a pretty foot he confessed an especial weakness. The ladies of Havana are, as is well known, celebrated for their lower extremities being

Fine by degrees and beautifully less ;

and his eye having been educated in that school, the feet of his countrywomen, though enjoying a good European reputation for smallness and symmetry, appeared to him large and ungainly. The pretensions of Madame B—— irritated and annoyed him.

Compared to his Havana beauties, her feet were elephantine. And to give weight to his assertion, he drew from his breast a white satin shoe, of fairy-like proportions, which exhibited signs of having been worn, and which he assured us had covered the foot of a lady at Havana. 'Now,' said he, 'if Madame B—— could wear this shoe, she might indeed be proud of her foot.' 'Depend upon it,' remarked one of our group, 'she would assert that her chaussure was as tiny as this.' 'Mais c'est ridicule,' remarked another. We were standing in the little square before the door of the hotel. It was after dinner-time, and before the nightly gathering of the guests in the salon. 'Écoutez,' said a mischievous wag, who was always ready for fun; 'I will tell you what we will do. Our friend here,' pointing to the small-foot worshipper, 'when the ladies are assembled in the salon, shall go in, and, holding up the chaussure, announce that it has been found in the hotel, and that, as it is a very diminutive and pretty shoe, it must appertain to as diminutive and pretty a foot. My life for it but Madame B—— will lay claim to it.' The proposition was received with acclamation. But the Havana gentleman, much as he desired to chastise her vanity, could not be persuaded to undertake the task. We then voted that it should be left in the hands of the proposer, who, of all present, was the fittest to play off the joke. Having made his arrangements, we waited until all the ladies had

entered the salon. The evening was chilly, and a cheerful wood-fire blazed in the capacious grate. The ladies had disposed themselves semicircularly before it. We dropped in by degrees, careful to avoid being suspected of concert. When we were all mustered, our spokesman stepped forward, and holding up the shoe, which gleamed in the wood fire light, like an elongated pearl, said, — ‘See, ladies, here is a shoe which has been found in one of the lobbies, it must belong to one of your party, but only her who has a very small foot can lay claim to it.’ As he spoke, the ladies (they numbered about twenty) turned round simultaneously to gaze at the Cinderella-like slipper, but the eyes of the majority quickly dropped, as they remembered the great disproportion between their own chausses and that exhibited. But the unconscious object of our ridicule was not so easily satisfied. Measuring by her eye the proportions of the Havana slipper with those of her own foot,—which, by this time, had been moved prominently forward,—she thought it possible that the shoe might belong to her, as her feet were ‘bien mignon.’ We could scarcely forbear laughing. ‘Pray then, Madam,’ said our chief actor, ‘try on the shoe;’ and he placed it in her hands. Closer inspection raised doubts. She examined the shoe minutely, and at length rose from her seat, and showing us all her right foot, with no inconsiderable portion of a well turned ankle, exclaimed, ‘My foot is small, but not

quite small enough for this shoe. Tenez, Monsieur, ce n'est pas à moi.' I think that the ladies, who, like all their sex, were quick at detecting our scheme, laughed even more heartily than ourselves at the ruse, which succeeded even beyond our hopes; and that they might be fully aware of it, we told them that the shoe belonged to a Spanish lady whose feet were, as might be presumed, of the tiniest proportions.

I need scarcely observe that Madame B—— favoured us no more with full-length views of her pretty feet—for pretty they decidedly were, whatever might be said to the contrary; and it seemed to me that her ardour for enterprising excursions was considerably damped.

It was pleasant in the atmosphere of republicanism to witness the deference that was paid to our fellow-guest, M. Polignac, who was an admirable specimen of a fine old gentleman of the ancient school of French politesse. I had the happiness of improving my acquaintance with him over some games of chess, which did not so entirely absorb us as to lock up our tongues. The name of Polignac is familiar to every one who is at all versed in French history. Early in the mighty revolution of 1792, the unfortunate Marie Antoinette formed a strong and lasting attachment for the Duchesse Jules de Polignac, which drew down on her family the revengeful hatred of the Jacobins. Ever faithful to the cause of royalty, the Polignacs used great exertions to effect the re-



storation of King Louis XVI. It was with much difficulty that Bonaparte was prevailed on to spare their lives. He imprisoned them in the fort of Vincennes. They escaped in 1814, and joined the allies. It is rather strange that M. Polignac has not seen the castle of his forefathers, which, though a crumbling ruin, is rich in interesting and proud associations.

We regretted when the time arrived for us to leave Mont Dore; it is a place where the lover of nature might pleasantly spend an entire summer. Though situated in the centre of France, the height of the valley deprives the atmosphere of the oppressive effect felt in that zone in the months of July and August. During our sojourn at the baths, in the latter month, I observed the thermometer daily, and the result of the readings gives an average of 68°.\* The evenings were occasionally chilly. In winter the bubbling rivulets are stiff and stark, and the whole face of the country assumes a polar aspect. The village is then deserted and dreary. The hotels are closed—the proprietors and their establishments removing to Clermont. The post-mistress—a lively Parisian—gave a formidable account of the past winter, which she had passed at Mont Dore. It appears she had the misfortune to offend the Republican authorities by her devotion to Louis Philippe; and

\* The average summer temperature of Clermont is 64°4.

she was, as she said, transported from the delights of a village near the gay capital, to the Siberia of Mont Dore. She did not think it possible that she could survive another winter in the place, and had petitioned to be removed to a more genial abode.

If any of my readers should be disposed, after perusing these pages, to think of spending a vacation at the baths, they will do well to provide themselves with everything that they may require during their sojourn, in the shape of habiliments, books, drawing-materials, &c., for none of these articles are to be purchased at Mont Dore. Indeed, the village scarcely boasts a shop, and is as unlike a German watering-place in this respect as possible. We returned to Clermont by the *petite route*. There had been an *émeute* among the diligence people a couple of days before, which at one time threatened to terminate seriously. It arose in a curious way. The mayor combined with his official functions the calling of hotel-keeper, but unfortunately, though his house was good, the situation was villanous, his inn being wedged in a narrow cul-de-sac in the lower part of the town; and, as the diligences stopped in the square considerably higher up, where the office and principal hotels are situated, it followed as a matter of course, that scarcely any travellers patronized his worship's establishment. Unmindful of the motto which shone in golden letters under the flag of the Republic, whose servant he was, M. le Maire, availing himself of the high power of his office,

ordered the diligences to stop opposite to his hotel, utterly regardless of the inconvenience which might arise to the passengers or conductors. As may be imagined, the hotel-keepers in the square were greatly incensed by this despotism. Mustering their forces, they rushed down the town, and dragged the diligences to their usual halting places. The mayor witnessed this act of insubordination, but had not the means to assert his authority. The following day, however, he took his measures. Organizing his forces of four gens d'armes, with mustachios stretching from ear to ear, and swords of Goliath dimensions, he kept them in ambush, awaiting the arrival of the diligences. As usual, they were proceeding up the street, when the mayor ordered the conducteurs to stop. Backed by the bureau-keepers and hotel-garçons, they unheeded the command, when out rushed the gens d'armes from their place of concealment, and in a moment captured the leaders of the revolt, and imprisoned them in one of the vapour-bath rooms. The passengers were in a state of great alarm, which was not allayed by seeing their luggage carried off by the mayor's hotel forces. The whole population was in the street, hooting and yelling like a pack of demons, and I fully expected to see the row end in a more tragical manner than blows and kicks inflicted and received by both parties. The gens-d'armes carried the day ; but the other hotel-keepers had joined in signing a petition to the Prefect, remonstrating against the conduct of the

mayor, and praying that he might be deposed. And richly the rascal deserved it.

There is little to interest the traveller by the *petite route*, excepting Randanne, which is situated half-way between Mont Dore and Clermont. The road is very dislocatory. Our diligence, with every jolt, yawned, and displayed large seams and fissures, which threatened to suck in our legs. At the above place, the crazy machine came to a stand-still for an hour and a half, during which time, not caring to dine so early, for it was only noon, we strolled about. There is a fine group of fiery-red volcanoes near Randanne, which are particularly curious in a geological point of view. The place is interesting, also, as being the last home of the Count de Montlosier, who, after having been buffeted about the world for many years, selected it, on his return from exile in 1820, for his residence. It was at that period a perfect wilderness. By dint of great labour and agricultural skill, he succeeded in reclaiming a large district, covered with scoriæ, and converted it into smiling fields. He planted vast tracts of mountain land, which now display a wide-spreading forest, and built a large mansion, surrounding it with numerous farming tenements. But while all this was being done, his biographer tells us that he was ‘logé dans une cabane de paille, puis dans l’étable, car la maison du propriétaire devait être la dernière construite. Ainsi, campé sur la route des Monts Dore, sa principale distraction était d’offrir une hospitalité de quelques moments aux voyageurs

qui passaient dans la saison des eaux.' Count de Montlosier was in every way a remarkable man. The stormy political period in which he lived and acted did not quench his ardour for scientific pursuits. The geology of Auvergne early attracted his attention, and his 'Essai sur la Théorie des Volcans d'Auvergne,' published so long ago as 1789, attests his diligent investigation, while the soundness of his views has been confirmed by recent geologists.

When driven from France, he selected England for his residence, and established the *London Courier*, which met with great success. It is extraordinary that so philanthropic a man as Count de Montlosier seems to have been, should have had his remains visited by the unrelenting persecution of the Church of Rome. At an early period of his life he wrote against the Jesuits and Jesuitism, urging them to use a cross of wood instead of one of gold; for, said he, 'C'est la croix de bois qui a sauvé le monde.' His censures were neither forgotten nor forgiven. The Bishop of Clermont denied what he called Christian burial to the poor Count, and, accordingly, his dust reposes in the midst of his own creation, — the beautiful woods which clothe the hill sides. A charming miniature chapel has been reared over his remains. Now may be said:—

How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic roar,  
The weight of his exterminating curse  
How light.

Shortly after leaving Randanne, we came under the

shadow of the Puy de Dome, which loses nothing in massive grandeur after a residence among the brood of Puys circling Mont Dore. At three in the afternoon we entered Clermont. The town was in a ferment, and our hotel in a state of chaotic bewilderment. This time the actors were fair-men,—buyers and sellers of thousands of hides, which were piled up in the streets, much to the discomfort of passengers.

To increase the hubbub, a general of division, and his staff of glittering officers, were quartered in the apartments occupied, during our late visit, by Mademoiselle Rachel, and soldiers were hastening to and fro all the evening. After dinner, his generalship was serenaded by an admirable military band, consisting of fifty-seven performers, who executed several operatic pieces in a charming manner.

The day after our arrival at Clermont was Sunday. The cathedral, at the time of divine service, was filled with a congregation of women. Scarcely a man was visible. The organ poured forth its rich tones of melody, but the chanting was very indifferent.

In the afternoon I was greatly amused by the vagaries of a tribe of quack doctors, who had pitched their tents in the capacious Place Jaude, and had drawn the peasant population of the neighbourhood of Clermont round them. They represented a race rapidly passing away. Not that quackery is in a state of *articulo mortis*,—the impudent advertisements

in any of our public prints disprove this,—but these public exhibitions are becoming very rare. In England they have ceased, and in France nearly so. Still, however, on occasions like the present, quack doctors are to be seen, attired in many-coloured garments, quaintly fashioned, making the same professions as their progenitor in Paris, who, according to Addison, was heralded by a child through the streets, crying with a loud voice, ‘My father cures all sorts of distempers;’ to which the doctor added, ‘What the child says is true.’

By far the most amusing and drollest fellow of those who were candidates for the Auvergnats’ patronage, was a quack dentist. He was mounted on a machine resembling a huge diligence, gaily painted, and lettered — ‘Le Célèbre Docteur et Dentiste Millarozo de Paris—Pour toutes les Départemens.’ On a table before him rose a pyramid of teeth, flanked by specifics against tooth-ache, contained in small phials. Two sets of steps led to his stage, beneath which were four fellows, who pumped every available breath out of their convulsed lungs into two trombones, a French horn, and a trumpet. At the ringing of a bell the ear-torturers ceased, and the quack commenced. His oratory was most effective. As he depicted the horrid agonies of tooth-ache, he held up to view long rows of carious teeth, with fangs of feline proportions, which he had wrenched from quivering jaws, and then declared that the purchase

of one bottle—one only of his extraordinary liquid—would entirely prevent such aching tortures. Who could resist buying—and the price only one franc? A brisk sale followed. When customers fell off, he offered to extract teeth gratuitously. There was a rush of peasants to his stage; old and young, men and women flocked up his steps. One after another occupied his operating-chair. Quick as lightning he whipped out a tooth, whether sound or diseased appeared to be a matter of perfect indifference to him. At every tug, when the unfortunate patient writhed with pain, the crowds below roared with laughter. Then succeeded music, and another lively sale of bottles, to the comfort of the peasants and the profit of Monsieur Millarozo, who, with his ready wit and dexterous hands, reminded me strongly of the famous quicksilver doctor in Schiller's robbers.

We were so fortunate as to obtain seats in the coupé of the sole diligence journeying from Clermont to Le Puy. A glance sufficed to show that our conveyance was not framed to travel at any formidable speed; but independently of its build, which was to coaches what a Dutch heavy bottom is to ships, the machine was so loaded by dead and living weight, that I foresaw at once we should not get more than three or four miles an hour out of it; and so it proved. The clocks were striking nine, on the morning of the 27th of August, as we left Clermont, and we did not arrive at Le Puy until half-



past four the following morning, though the distance between the two towns is only seventy-two miles. Think of this, ye Great Western railway travellers, who rush through the air with the speed of a storm-bird. Few things mark the difference in energy between the two nations of France and England more than the apathy and indifference which exists among Frenchmen with regard to the locomotive rate of their public conveyances. One would imagine that their country was a paradise of loveliness, to be travelled through slowly and lingeringly. But being (the frame excepted,) generally the reverse, it is marvellous that the people should be content with crawling through it at a pace little faster than walking. The stories that we read of coach-travelling in Great Britain a century ago, apply to the present state of locomotion in France. Long before railways consigned stage-coaches in England to oblivion, their speed had been accelerated to an almost dangerous maximum. But in France no attempt has been made to improve the rate of travelling, and the people seem to be as satisfied with their paradoxically-styled diligences, as the Chinese are with their junks. We jogged through the day pleasantly enough. The volcanos, their bases wreathed with vines, and summits crowned, in many instances, with crumbling castles, were never-tiring objects of interest. One of these ruins near Coudes, named D'Usson, is pointed out as the place of confinement selected by Henry IV. for his

divorced Queen, Margaret of Valois. At Issoire, we made a long pause, which, happily, we were enabled to fill up profitably, by an examination of the very curious church of St. Paul, which is an admirable specimen of the Romanesque style, prevalent in Auvergne during the tenth century.

There is a saying current in Auvergne—

*Il ne faut pas sortir d'Issoire  
Pour moudre, ni pour cuire, ni belles filles voir,  
Et pour de l'excellent vin boire.*

The pretty girls we saw not—the excellent wine we tasted not; but we did see a prodigious number of copper kettles, for the manufacture of which Issoire is celebrated.

At Brioude, 'twixt light and dark, our snail-paced vehicle made another long halt, during which we dined or supped, and then betook ourselves to our night's prison-house, anticipating, in the words of Prospero, 'for this, be sure, to night thou shalt have cramps, side-stitches that shall pen thy breath up,' nor were we disappointed. It was a villanous night, unrelieved by any stirring or exciting incident, save an attempt that was made to break in a huge horse, by placing him in the shafts of the diligence between two horses. Powerfully muscular as was the beast, he had not sufficient strength to run away with the lumbering vehicle, so, abandoning the attempt, he spent his spare force in kicks, that crashed through a large trunk placed outside the coupé. But for this

shield, his hoofs would have been in close companionship with our knees. As the morning dawned, we crept up the rim of the huge volcanic basin of Le Puy, and descended from it to the town: it was too dark, however, to see the country distinctly, and when the diligence stopped we hastened to the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, and blotted out the remembrance of our sufferings in luxurious slumber.

## CHAPTER IX.

PLUTARCH declared that a friend is more necessary to man than water;\* but if the learned Grecian had passed a day and night in a French diligence, he would, if wrapped in such skin as men now wear, prefer a bath to all the friends in the world. Physiologists tell us that our *dermis*, or true skin, is pierced by 7,000,000 perspiratory tubes, forming a total length of 48,600 yards, or nearly twenty-eight miles. No wonder that we should feel miserably uncomfortable when these tubes have been plugged up by the particles of dust which buzz about a traveller in a French diligence, as floating meal round gyrating millstones. And no wonder that we should feel as if we had cast off a slough, when, by a good ablution, our pore-draining machinery is enabled to act freely again. We were also much indebted to an excellent breakfast for being thoroughly invigorated. We then sallied forth to see Le Puy. This is, without exception the quaintest, funniest, and most picturesque town out of China that it is possible to conceive. We were prepared to expect much, but the reality exceeded the ideality. A general impression of the

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\* 'Amicus magis necessarius quam aqua.'

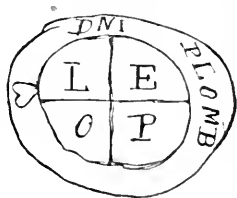
town may be formed by ascending the cathedral tower, but the streets must be threaded to become fully aware of the architectural curiosities of the place. Le Puy, or, as it is generally called, Puy, is built in the form of an amphitheatre on the southern side of a steep hill, anciently bearing the name of Mont Anis. The site is so exceedingly inconvenient for a town, that one is puzzled to guess how it ever came to be selected. History, however, tells us, that certain monks in the eighth century, who dwelt here, happened to possess an image of the Virgin, of such miraculous powers, that their convent became the resort of many thousand pilgrims, some of whom resolved to abide under the protection of 'Our Lady,' and so a town was gradually formed. Its name is derived from the old Aquitanian word, *Puech*, or *Puich*, signifying mountain, which sufficiently describes its situation. So steep are the streets, that the pavement assumes the form of steps, and hand-rails are in many places attached to the houses to aid the wayfarer in his ascent. As to the buildings, it is a direct contradiction of the laws of gravity that they do not slide down the hill to the valley beneath—they must, it is presumed, obey the spiritual attraction which exists in the church towering over them. The culminating point of Mont Anis is a singularly formed mass of breccia, impregnated with iron, called the *Rocher de Corneille*, whose summit bears the mouldering remains of a castle, said to have sheltered many bishops during seasons of popular discontent. The cathedral stands immediately

under the Rocher de Corneille. It is a noble building, suggestive of a noble-minded architect. The nature of the ground was such as to prevent the construction of a large edifice. The architect, nothing daunted, reared an artificial platform upon three gigantic arches, which present magnificent portals, and are attained by a flight of 118 steps. The effect of these deep vaulted arches is particularly grand. Repairs on a large scale were going on at the time of our visit, and we found it difficult to explore the labyrinthine passages round the cathedral. Addressing myself to a couple of priests, one kindly took us through a private door into the cloisters, which are exceedingly perfect and curious. I shall not encroach on the guide-book's province by describing the church, more than by saying that it is in the Romanesque style, dating from the eighth century. The miraculous image of the Virgin appears, if priests are to be believed, to have brought down the especial blessing of God on it; for as soon as it was ready for consecration, and as the jewelled bishops with their train of priests were about entering the building for that purpose, the doors were flung open, voices proceeding from unseen forms were heard chanting, and the whole of the vast interior was a blaze of light and redolent of perfume.

Ponderous tomes have been written on the image which has made Le Puy celebrated. The majority of accounts concur in stating, that it was made by the Christians of Mount Lebanon, and brought to Europe

at the time of the Crusades by St. Louis, who presented it to the church. Unhappily for its fame, it had not power to save itself from the fury of the mob during the revolution of 1792, who, unawed by its reputed sanctity, destroyed it, immolating at the same time seventy priests. It was made of cedar-wood, wrapped by slips of papyrus, bearing inscriptions. The features of the face resembled those of an Egyptian. It was customary to wash the figure on each Good Friday with wine, and to load it with costly jewels presented by numerous monarchs. A portion of the papyrus which swathed the image is preserved in the town-museum. It bears a seal thus

figured; and attached to it are these words: ‘An 1051, Leon IX. en sa Bulle écrite en écorce d’arbre, adressé à Etienne de Mercam, Evêque de Puy, dit qu’il n’y a pas d’Église en France où la Sainte Vierge soit plus religieusement vénérée.’ Many popes and kings visited the fragment of painted wood, leaving behind them substantial proofs of their religious zeal.



It might be supposed that when the image was destroyed, pilgrims would no longer visit Le Puy. However, a cunning craftsman, who retained a perfect remembrance of the little black lady's appearance, fabricated an image similar to it, which now does duty over the high altar, and attracts some 4000 persons annually. Few churches in Europe possessed so many

relics as that of Le Puy. Their enumeration is curious. *Imprimis*: The lance that pierced our Saviour's side; a piece of the true cross; a nail which fastened the right hand of Jesus to the cross; a piece of the sponge; the cloth used at the last supper; the robe of the Lord; a bottle of the Virgin's milk; one of her shoes; a sleeve of her gown; a tooth of St. Magdalen; a bone of Lazarus; the skeletons of six of the eleven thousand virgins; a piece of the camel's skin worn by St. John; the finger with which he pointed, exclaiming, 'Behold the Lord!' a pitcher from the marriage-feast of Cana; the fringes and bells of Aaron; the horn of St. Hubert; and a snow-white lock of St. Louis' hair.

These relics seem to have been almost as much venerated as the image of the Virgin. It is recorded that on one occasion when they were shown, the people crowded in such numbers, that one hundred and forty were suffocated. However, the relics shared the fate of 'Nôtre Dame,' and now the church has nothing to show but some magnificent priests' robes and valuable plate, presented by Charles X. and Louis Philippe. The vicinity of the cathedral abounds with picturesque *morceaux*, some of which we transferred to our sketch-books. It never fell to my lot to see so many priests as I did while thus occupied. The archbishop of the diocese was holding a visitation in the palace which adjoins the cathedral, and all day long black-robed priests moved to and fro, and crept up the narrow little streets leading to their college. We



were told that they numbered two thousand. Independently of many objects of local interest preserved in the Museum, such as Roman remains disinterred in the neighbourhood, ancient armour, furniture, &c., a large collection of fossil bones of extinct animals, discovered in the adjoining volcanic district of Le Velay, is exhibited. Some of them have been examined and named by Cuvier.

The streets of Le Puy afford an endless variety of amusement. Here, indeed, is no monotony of miles of similar houses; each habitation differs in some respect from its neighbour, and all are more or less ornamented. The shops have quite an Eastern air, being open, and exposing their goods *en plein air*. Half of them are devoted to the sale of lace, the manufacture of which employs twenty thousand women in Le Puy and the district of Le Velay. Throughout the day, the female population, of all ages, may be seen seated before their doors, twirling their lace bobbins with wonderful celerity. The lace is made of cotton. We purchased some specimens, which our lady friends at home pronounced to be of great beauty, and cheap. Large quantities are purchased for Paris and London.

The dress of the peasant women is most picturesque: dark green robes, with rich coloured bodices and handkerchiefs. The head is covered by a snow-white cap, trimmed with lace, and surmounted by a funny little black felt hat, but little larger than a saucer. It is generally worn quite plain, but

dashing maidens, who can afford it, ornament the hat with feathers and gold ornaments. The effect of this head-dress is most singular. Desirous of possessing a reminiscence of it, we asked our landlady to procure a pretty girl from the market-place, offering a remuneration if she would sit to us. Presently the garçon appeared with a couple of blushing beauties, either of whom would have made an admirable subject for an artist's pencil. No sooner, however, were they made aware of the uses to which we intended to put them, than they scampered off, frightened out of their senses, and resisted all entreaties and offers of money to remain. Thus discomfited, we were obliged to be satisfied with a *fille-de-chambre* belonging to the hotel, who was but a poor substitute for the market-girls. Here, however, is her head-dress.



Our-hotel windows commanded the Place de Breuil, where the fruit and vegetable market is held.

How Mieris would have revelled over the scenes. There were pyramids of gourds and melons, baskets of juicy figs and luscious grapes, purple plums and rosy apples, mingling their colours in delicious harmony with those of the peasants' dresses.

Adjoining the town rises the very remarkable isolated Rocher de St. Michel, which, from its spire-like form, gives the name of l'Aiguille to the suburb in which it stands. It is a most striking feature, attaining an elevation of 265 feet, and presenting perpendicular walls on all sides. The diameter of the base is about three hundred feet, decreasing to about forty-five at the top. This is surmounted by a miniature chapel, whose foundations fit into the inequalities of the rocky platform, seeming to grow out of it. Access to the chapel is gained by means of steps cut in the solid rock. An old woman to whom we were directed gave us the key of the chapel, and, unlocking the door at the base of the rock, allowed us to ascend unattended. The view from the top extends over vine-clad volcanic slopes, dotted with white villas, and the huge basaltic cliffs of Espailly, backed by the chain of the Cevennes mountains. The façade of the little chapel presents a mosaic of black lava, white sandstone, and red tiles, formed into grotesque figures and patterns. Unlocking the door, we passed into the interior, which consists of a small choir, supported on low pillars with richly-carved capitals. A single altar is placed at the east end. On it was an image of the Virgin, and a

pewter plate containing several small pieces of money, the offerings of pious visitors. Behind the altar are some curious hiding places, provided with air channels, which were doubtless used for priestly purposes, when deception was made subservient to gain. A lofty spire surmounts the chapel, thus causing the rock to appear, at a distance, like a needle. It is impossible to contemplate this exceedingly curious natural obelisk without speculating on its existence. It is supposed that what may now be called the valley of Le Puy was, at one time, a vast volcanic bed of tufa, resting on strata of tertiary formation, but covered by alluvial detritus. Portions of this bed consisted of breccia impregnated with iron, and these have resisted the erosive influence of meteorological agents acting through many centuries. Such is the composition of the Rochers de St. Michel and Cornille. Human calculation becomes weak and inefficient when it is attempted to measure the time during which the slow action of the atmosphere and of water have been effecting these great changes, which are still in progress, though their extent is unnoticed during the few brief years of man's life. Mr. Scrope well observes,—‘How many conflicting and wonderful theories might naturalists have spared themselves the pains of inventing and propagating, how many puzzling and hourly accumulating facts might even now be simply and satisfactorily accounted for, would we but consent to allow its *possible* effects to the decomposing, wasting, and abrasive influence of

meteoric agents, not measuring their power by the scale of our limited observations, nor the duration of their action by the microscopic span of our own existence.\*

Reasoning thus, we are struck with the deep meaning of the passage in Holy Writ, that ‘with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.’

We devoted the greater part of a day to an excursion to the Castle of Polignac, which is about two hours’ walk from Le Puy. The scenery, as usual in this volcanic country, was very striking and varied. A sudden turn of the road disclosed the castle, now reduced to a few ruined towers, which surmount a huge rock of breccia, inaccessible on all sides but that on the north. The village of Polignac nestles under the vertical cliffs, having outlived its once formidable feudal neighbour. As we wound up the rocky path leading to the castle gates, we were much struck by the bright hues of the lichens which coat the rocks, giving them an appearance of being painted. Knocking at the ancient oaken doors, a girl admitted us, and a few steps brought us among the crumbling ruins. Amid them, in cleared patches, oxen were ploughing, where once knights trod in armed mail. The castle, when intact, was of prodigious extent and strength. The donjon tower is the only part now remaining at all perfect. The fury of the revolution

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\* *Geology of Central France*, p. 140.

of 1792 fell heavily on the rest of the buildings, and the extraordinary strength of the existing tower alone explains its preservation. In the great square adjoining it is a huge shaft, called the Puit de l'Oracle, which we ascertained to be 129 feet deep. At the depth of twenty feet it opens out into a complete labyrinth of passages and chambers, which must have been used for terribly dark purposes. Tradition relates that a temple dedicated to Apollo formerly stood near the shaft, and that from the murky depths of the latter the oracles of the god were delivered. This is in a great measure confirmed by the discovery of a huge stone mask which covered the opening of the shaft. This mask is preserved in a room near the castle gates. The features are rude but imposing; the mouth is wide open, for the purpose of giving free passage to the awful sounds which were uttered by crafty priests beneath. Its situation was in keeping with the myth relating to the original oracle. This was in possession of Themis, who kept it at the bottom of a fearful and mysterious chasm, guarded by the dragon Python. Various Roman inscriptions have been found among the ruins; one runs thus:

Tiberivs Clavdivs Cæs. Avg. Germ.  
Pontifex Max. Trib. Potestate  
V. Imp. XI. Pater. Pat. Cons. IV.

The castle derives additional interest from having been the cradle of the celebrated Cardinal Polignac, the diplomatic servant of Louis XIV., of whom Voltaire said:

Le Cardinal, oracle de la France,  
Réunissant Virgile avec Platon,  
Vengeur du ciel et vainqueur de Luerèce :\*

and Madame de Sevigné wrote—‘ C’est un des hommes du monde, dont l’esprit me paraît le plus agréable ; il sait tout, il parle de tout ; il a toute la douceur, la vivacité, la complaisance, qu’on peut souhaiter.’†

Bearing in mind all the associations connected with the place, it appears nothing short of extraordinary that the present representative of so illustrious a name has never seen the ancient home of his fathers. Arthur Young, who, in his travels in France, rarely wanders from the legitimate subject of his work, breaks out thus on contemplating Polignac : ‘ Perhaps there is nowhere to be met with a castle more formed to give a local pride of family than this of Polignac ; the man hardly exists that would not feel a certain vanity at having given his own name, from remote antiquity, to so singular and commanding a rock ; but if, with a name, it belonged to me, I would scarcely sell it for a province.’‡

I think there is little doubt that the present M. Polignac would sell it for a small fraction of a province. He must be a needy or a grasping man, for the small plateau amidst the ruins is let to a peasant, who pays one hundred francs per annum for the barren privilege of tilling it.

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\* *Temple du Gaul.*

† *Lettre à Coulanges*, 18 Mars, 1690.    ‡ Vol. I. p. 165.

and disgustingly. On the second occasion of our dining in the salon, a grand political tourney was held between the aforesaid bagmen and the landlord, the former being red republicans, hot from Paris, the latter a zealous royalist. 'Give me,' said he, 'order and quiet, three hearty meals daily, good wine, and an honest king, and I want no more.' Then came the question, whether Louis Philippe had acted an honest part? and this led to a long and hot argument. Abundance of hard words and soft spitting. The landlord evinced no courtesy to his guests: independent as a Yankee, he contended for his rights, and finally rose from table, protesting that he was the only loyal man in Le Puy. He adjourned with us to the Café de Paris, where, over a cup of coffee, he gave us some account of the politics of Le Velay, from which I deduced that the Auvergnats of that part of the country deserve the reputation that they bear, of being Jacobin republicans.

It is worthy of remark that, here as well as elsewhere, when present at political discussions, in which I sometimes bore a part, the greatest courtesy was extended to me, although I always took care to proclaim my country. But happily no resentment seems to be entertained against the once 'Perfide Albion,' and, judging from the high expressions of esteem for England which I heard from different political parties, and the desire for peace and tranquillity, I conceived hopes that Beranger might yet live to see the realization, in



part at least, of his noble sonnet, *La Sainte Alliance des Peuples* :

J'ai vu la Paix descendre sur la terre,  
Sémant de l'or, des fleurs, et des épis :  
L'air était calme et du Dieu de la Guerre  
Elle étouffait les foudres assoupis :  
Ah, disait-elle, égaux par la vaillance,  
Français, Anglais, Belge, Russe, ou Germain  
Peuples, formez une Sainte Alliance,  
Et donnez vous la main.

When we had fixed the day for our departure, we found that no public conveyance existed in the direction that we wished to travel. Indeed, there are only two diligences which connect Le Puy with other parts of France. This will astonish the reader, as it did us, when he hears that the town contains upwards of 16,000 inhabitants. One diligence goes to Clermont—the other to Lyons. Our proposed route was eastward to Valence, on the Rhone, about fifty miles distant. It struck me that Le Puy might be called *Le Puit*, for it stands, in proportion to its population, at the bottom of all towns that I know for locomotive facilities. In our case, there was evidently nothing for it but to hire a carriage; even this, however, was beset with difficulties. The first man who came to bargain demanded 110 francs to take us to Valence. This was so exorbitant a sum that I instantly dismissed the fellow, and sent for another voiturier. The second, with more conscience, asked sixty francs; his carriage was double-horsed, whereas that of the first man was drawn by only one poor

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beast. Sixty francs, however, was too much, so after some trouble I found out a third man. He asked forty-five francs, but instead of proceeding direct to Valence, he proposed taking us round by Annonay, which he argued was by far the best route. This move I could not immediately comprehend, but the levers which were working for his interest became at length apparent by diligent cross-questioning on my part. He lived at Annonay, and had come to Le Puy to purchase a cabriolet, which he intended driving home. Thus I discovered that he would have to travel to Annonay whether we went there or not; and when he saw that he had enlightened us a little more than he originally intended, he reduced his price to twenty-five francs, for which sum he undertook to drive us to Annonay, about ten miles less than the distance to Valence, and thirty miles north of it. From Annonay we found that we could strike the Rhone at Andance, about eight miles distant, and proceed by the steamer, descending the river to Valence.

The offer of riding in a new carriage was rather tempting, so we closed the bargain. The result that we deduced from these conferences led us to believe that there was truth in the proverb, which runs:—

Serait-ce un Auvergnat, un Suisse, un bas Normand,  
Qui ne sait de Français que ce mot;—De l'Argent ?

## CHAPTER X.

WHEN one lies down at night with the conviction weighing heavily on the mind, that ere the first streak of dawn flecks the east, one should be miles away, sleep assumes a form full of shadowy troubles,—coaches appear perpetually driving away, or railway-trains rushing frantically through space, but a moment before we arrive in imagination at their starting place. Such were my visions when, between sleeping and waking, a thundering noise at my bedroom door roused me before daylight. It was the voiturier, bearing the stable-lantern, who came according to his promise to call us. Our toilet was not a very lengthy affair. In a few minutes we were ready, and drove off in the new cabriolet, that was drawn by a smart little horse, which promised and performed well. The curtain of night was gathered up from pole to pole as we passed out of Le Puy, which looked picturesque to the last. Our road lay through the volcanic district of Le Velay, which presented the usual basaltic and trachytic features so common in this part of Auvergne. We passed, on our left, the ruined castle of Lardeyrolles, where the terrible Baron Adrets formerly resided,—of whom it is related, that once being in want of a little exciting

amusement, he summoned a number of prisoners from their dungeons to an upper room, and then ordered them to leap out of the window into the court-yard beneath. When several had thus met their death, one made two apparent attempts at the leap, but hung back. 'To fail twice is too much,' said the cruel baron. 'I will give you ten times, and you will not do it,' replied the unfortunate prisoner. This bold and ready answer so pleased the tyrant, that he liberated his victim. Our route carried us through an excessively wild country, out of the guidance of Mr. Murray's excellent *Hand-book*, for it is not laid down in its pages. After passing Lardeyrolles, we commenced the ascent of Mont Pertuis,—a long climb, which occupied two hours to surmount. At the foot of the mountain, on the opposite side, is the romantic gorge of the Laryon, fringed with a profusion of fine trees, and watered by a foaming torrent. At the point where the road crosses the gorge, by means of a wooden bridge, a desperate and successful rescue of a murderer was effected lately. The malefactor was on his way to Yssingaux to be executed. He was conducted by six gens-d'armes strongly armed. A large force of peasantry assembled, and concealed themselves behind some rocks and trees commanding the bridge. As soon as the gens-d'armes, with their prisoner, were half-way over the bridge, the peasants assailed the former with such showers of stones that they were quickly

overpowered, and were obliged to leave their prisoner in the hands of their unexpected assailants, who speedily struck off his irons, and carried him into their mountain fastnesses. At Yssingeaux, fourteen miles from Le Puy, we halted to breakfast. The inn looked most unpromising; the cuisine and stable were in close proximity, and emitted odours anything but piquant. However, matters turned out better than we expected. We had inquired doubtfully whether we could obtain any breakfast. The chef-de-cuisine—who, with his snow-white cap and apron, contrasted strangely with the dirt and filth of his sanctum—was evidently ruffled at our doubts, led us into an inner room, dignified by the name of salon, begged us to be seated, and assured us that we should be served immediately. We only made one condition—coffee was to form an ingredient of our repast. While it was preparing, we strolled into a garden attached to the inn.

When we returned to the salon, our breakfast was placed on the table. It did great credit to the resources of the establishment, and must have been peculiarly gratifying to us,—for I find it honourably recorded in my note-book, which, with me, is a practice always more honoured in the breach than in the observance. We had most delicious trout, sundry relays of mutton-chops, excellent bread, fresh creamy eggs, honey, butter, and strong, clear, and hot coffee. ‘So,’ said the chef-de-cuisine, who

I have strong reason to believe combined this office with that of landlord, ‘you did not think that you could get breakfast here?’ I made some excuse—assured him that the breakfast was excellent—though, by this confession, I jeopardized the fairness of the bill—and then asked how much we had to pay? For the meal—and let the reader be assured we made a meal—the charge was only two francs a head. To have reaped a profit, viands must be, as indeed they are, far cheaper in this part of France than in England.\*

Although we were ready to renew our journey, our horse was not, as it required rest as well as food. The streets of Yssingeaux held out no promise of interest; however, as we had nothing better to do, we strolled out. We were amply rewarded, for in the course of our rambles we came upon a goat-market. Reader, have you ever seen a market for the buying and selling of these bearded beasts? If not, believe, if the adjuncts are in keeping, that it is one of the most picturesque sights imaginable.

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\* I had the curiosity to make several inquiries respecting the price of meat in Auvergne. The result, after making the necessary calculations to reduce the kilogramme to its equivalent in English avoirdupois weight, produced the following figures:—Beef 4*d.* a pound, mutton  $3\frac{3}{4}$ *d.*, veal  $3\frac{3}{4}$ *d.* These prices slightly exceed those quoted by Young for the South of France in 1792. The best wheaten bread, I may add, was selling at six sous the kilogramme, this weight being equal to 2·206 English pounds avoirdupois.



At Yssingeaux, the market-place seemed made for the goats, and the goats for the market-place. Beneath wide-spreading chestnut trees, which threw their arching branches over the road, were grouped, seated, standing, or leaning against the trees or walls, a number of peasants,—the men attired in russet green, and wearing a huge brimmed hat, the women in rich brown and red robes, similar to those at Le Puy. Gathered round them were the goats, of all sizes and ages, male and female. Of course such a gathering was not likely to be very peaceable; and as this horned ruminant is not celebrated for pacific qualities, it may be conceived that, on this occasion, battering and butting scenes were not rare. But strange liberties were taken with them. Their eyes were examined with a minuteness which might lead one to suppose that the value of the animals consisted in the brightness of that organ, or that they were about to be operated on for cataract. The udders of the females, which were distended to enormous proportions, were handled in a manner highly repugnant to the poor beasts, which manifested their dislike to these operations by violent kickings and strugglings. Their hair was felt and pulled, and the owners of the animals were particularly solicitous to draw the attention of the buyers to its length and smoothness. Several animals possessed splendid coats: in the days of wigs, they would have been eagerly sought after for the manufacture of that article. Pennant

mentions that, in his time, a good goat-skin, well haired, sold for a guinea; but a bad skin, which was so yellow as to baffle the barber's skill to bleach, did not fetch above eighteenpence or two shillings. Among the uses to which the hair is now put is that of stuffing pillows. This brings to recollection the pillow of goat's hair which we read of in the Book of Samuel, that supported the head of the image with which Michal deceived the messengers of Saul.

The operations of buying and selling were conducted with much vociferation and gesticulation. After thoroughly handling the goat, its price was demanded. The sum, whatever it might be, was declared to be utterly out of proportion to the value of the beast. Then followed violent shakings of the hand between buyer and seller, accompanied by various noisy ejaculations, interrupted only by lower offers on the part of the former. When the bidding was accepted, the bargain was made binding by the seller and buyer clapping hands loudly. The goats in greatest request were those yielding milk. An animal giving two kilogrammes of milk daily—equal to 4·411 English pounds—was worth from twelve to fifteen francs. During the winter, the goats are kept in troops of fifty and sixty, and are fed on moist vine-leaves. They are exceedingly fond of this food. The classical reader will remember that the goat was sacrificed to Bacchus, on account of its being considered an enemy to the vine.

We resumed our journey at eleven o'clock. The road continued ascending, traversing high cols covered with dense pine forests until we came to St. Bonnet le Froid, a miserable village, which stands at such an elevation, that even at the time of our visit the cold, for the season of year, was excessive. Here we halted to dine. The Auberge did not, like that at Yssingaux, perform better than it promised. It was a rough affair, and furnished the simplest fare: goat cheese, milk, and bread formed our repast. Wild-looking peasants clustered round a fire blazing in a wide-mouthed grate. The salon served the manifold purposes of kitchen, parlour, and sleeping-room. Funny little beds occupied recesses in the walls round the room; they were few in number, and the host's family large. Imagination conceived lively pictures of the animated population that inhabited them during the night-watches. Over each bed were religious pictures and crosses, with holy water.

In winter, the greater portion of the houses at St. Bonnet are under snow. Sledges are then used, and the inhabitants undergo all the severity of the Arctic regions. The road for many miles is marked by snow-poles, without which, it would be impossible to follow it. No wonder that St. Bonnet bears the additional name of Le Froid. It puzzles one to guess how the village ever came into existence, planted, as it is, on the summit of the bleakest and

most barren col in this part of France. We were not a little pleased to bid it farewell, and to exchange its climate for that of the Val de Voconce, into which our road descended. We were wholly unprepared for the romantic nature and exquisite loveliness of this valley. At its head, the mountains assume an Alpine character, being wreathed with dark pine forests, but as the road zig-zags downwards, umbrageous chestnut and walnut trees succeed; and long before the plains are reached, the vine mantles the cottages, and rich pastures peep like emeralds between the groves. In fact, the scenery constantly reminded me of some of the most favoured valleys in the North of Italy; and there is little doubt that if the Val de Voconce were near the highways to the South of France, its beauties would be much lauded. As it is, its name even is not mentioned in the guide-books.

The evening was closing when we emerged from the valley, the descent of which occupied three hours and a half. The road continued to descend all the way to Annonay, following the course of a river which flowed at the bottom of a deep rocky gorge. At half-past eight we entered the town, which, with its brilliant gas-lamps, had a strange effect after the sombre and ill-lighted towns of Auvergne. It was a long day's journey, and yet our horse came in apparently quite fresh.

We drove to the Hôtel du Midi, which is the prin-

cipal inn at Annonay. On demanding whether we could have bed-rooms, we were shown into such a miserable hole, that we recoiled from the den with consternation. The garçon declared that there was no better room to be had, as all the others were occupied. When, however, he saw that we were determined to try our fortune elsewhere, he changed his story, and, conducting us to the extremity of a long passage, threw open large folding doors, and introduced us to a room of noble proportions, handsomely furnished, and containing two beds. When I asked why this room had not been shown to us in the first instance, the garçon stammered forth some absurd excuse. This retention of the best rooms in an inn is a common trick with landlords: the object being to keep them for the possible arrival of a private-carriage guest, who of course will yield a better profit than a traveller who roughs it by public conveyances.

That night we supped well, as became the possessors of the best room in the best hotel of Annonay. Among the numerous dishes placed before us, was one that for a considerable time puzzled us extremely. It consisted of dried haricot beans, alternating with glass beads, strung on a circular piece of wire, about two inches in diameter. Haricot beans we knew to be a favourite dish with the French, but they are generally served in a more masticatory form than those described. It turned out that they were

intended for serviette holders. The garçon employed his leisure time in making them, and had brought in a dish full, hoping that we would patronize his ingenuity. As they were neither cumbrous nor expensive, we purchased a few.

On looking from our windows in the morning, we saw the murky pennons of the silk manufacturers flying from the tall chimneys. Annonay is not far from the St. Etienne coal-field, which is one of the most productive in France. Thus, several of the silk mills are driven by steam machinery, and the town is mantled by a dusky canopy of coal-smoke. The rapid waters of the Dieune and the Cance, which join a little way out of the town, are made serviceable for the celebrated paper-mills, which were originally established by the Montgolfiers of aërostatic fame, and are still worked by their descendants. It was in the Grande Place, on which our windows looked, that the first balloon carrying human beings ascended. These were Joseph and Etienne Montgolfier. An obelisk marks the precise spot from whence the balloon rose. On one side of the pedestal is this inscription:—

Aux deux Frères  
JOSEPH et ETIENNE MONTGOLFIER  
Par leurs  
CONCITOYENS.

Ici la première Expérience Aërostatique a été faite, le  
5 Juin, 1783 :

And on the opposite side—

Sic itur ad astra.

The site of this memorable exploit is certainly worthy of being preserved to future generations. Considerable courage must have been required to make the ascent, for the town is so irregularly built on rocky summits, and the environs so abounding in gorges and defiles, that the descent must have been a formidable part of the adventure. The balloon, which was composed of strong paper, weighed five hundred pounds. It measured 110 feet in circumference, and contained 22,000 cubic feet. On the application of fire underneath, the machine gradually expanded until it assumed the form of a large globe. The Montgolfiers then boldly took their places on the stage attached to the balloon, and, cutting the cords, it rose to the height of a mile, amidst the acclamations of thousands of people.

If the traveller be not curious respecting manufactures, he will find nothing at Annonay to induce him to prolong his stay beyond the limits of necessity. After breakfast we hired a cabriolet to take us to Andance. The usual ignorance respecting conveyances existed at the hotel. We were told that the steamer from Lyons passed Andance at ten in the morning: it turned out that it did not arrive before two in the afternoon. I am bound to record that the bill at our hotel, including, of course, the use of the state room, was not more than the average charge. On surmounting the hill which rises above Annonay, we strained our eyes to catch the outline of the Alps,—those ‘palaces of Nature,’

amidst which we hoped to dwell during some weeks. It is always an event in the life of an inhabitant of the plains to see those mighty mountains for the first time. Frequently as it has been my happiness to behold them, that day in a continental tour is always marked with a white stone when first they loom on my sight. And now we caught their shadowy forms,—

Alps on Alps in clusters swelling,  
Mighty, and pure, and fit to make  
The ramparts of a Godhead's dwelling.

They seemed to form the boundaries of another world, into which the spirit longed to penetrate. Our road lay between a succession of rich vineyards, which draped the granitic hill-sides. A long line of gleaming light in the plain before us marked the Rhone, on the banks of which we were deposited, two hours and a half after leaving Annonay.

If free to choose, I cannot say that Andance would be the place I should select to while away three, or even one, heavy hanging hour. It consists, or did at the time I write of, (for the Rhone, in seasons of swollen anger, knocks down houses on its banks as ninepins are treated,) of one long street of unpicturesque houses, between which stagnates a sea of dust. We had pictured to ourselves a pleasant hotel, with projecting balcony and shady verandah, overlooking the arrowy Rhone, where we might refresh the inner man until the boat paused to take us on board.



Vain imaginings ! Hotel there was none ; and the halting place of the steamer was a crazy old barge, from the mouldering depths of which a handsome, Venetian-shaped girl was most unfemininely employed in baling out green-coated water. The heat was intense. To remain on the cracked and baked banks of the river, unsheltered, was out of the question : so, depositing our luggage on the half-deck of the barge, we walked through the dusty street of the town in quest of a decent auberge. We entered the cleanest, and procured some cool wine and water, which formed a really luxurious beverage. Any attempt at a dinner we saw would be attended by signal failure, so we determined to postpone this repast until we arrived at Valence. A numerous and noisy troop of itinerant German musicians had laid bare the resources of the culinary part of the establishment in no very tempting manner. They were now, after dinner, indulging in smoking their pipes, when one of their number proposed cards. The proposition met with general approval. The fille was asked for *cartes-à-jouer*, but she could not understand them, so I interpreted their wishes to her, upon which she produced a pack of dirty and greasy cards, round which they gathered.

A little before two, we descried the approach of the steamer by a line of distant smoke. So rapid, however, was her progress—her own speed being assisted by the swift current of the river—that in a few minutes she was alongside the embarking place.

Our portmanteaus were flung on the deck, we stepped after them, the ropes were cast off, and we were gliding down the Rhone.

Heavens, how filthy that steamer was! Pleasant reminiscences of the Rhine boats came obtrusively to mind, in strong contrast with the beast of a thing in which we were now 'cabin'd, cribb'd, confined.' It was evident that passengers were but of very secondary importance, compared to merchandise. This was spread out on the deck, monopolising every comfortable portion of it, while the passengers were driven into holes and corners which scarcely afforded standing room. Among the merchandise were a quantity of casks, containing wine in a state of fermentation; these were ranged along the sides of the vessel, affording the only available seats. Treacherous resting-places, however, they proved; for no sooner had some luckless individual cast himself on them, than a loud fizzing noise, followed by a jet of vinous liquid, drove him quickly away.

Scared by these impromptu effusions, I betook myself to the middle of the ship, and climbing to the top of some ponderous bales, thought to await the hour of emancipation from the horrid boat patiently. I had just taken out my glasses, and opened my guide-book, when down came such a torrent of sooty water from the chimney, that the pages were blackened and my clothes befouled. Thus driven from my high lair I rushed to the fore part of the vessel, and there remained until the steamer swung round opposite

Valence, which she did as the clocks of that town were striking five. Most thankful were we to be liberated from the dirty boat. A couple of porters hoisted our luggage on their backs, and we followed them to the Hôtel de la Poste, in which we procured most pleasant rooms, looking into a garden filled with orange trees. I have not said anything of the scenery during our passage of about fifty miles down the Rhone. In a well-regulated steamboat, properly protected from the sun's rays, the views of the Alps, which grow more and more distinct as Valence is approached, would greatly charm the traveller, but half roasted and suffocated as we were, enjoyment of scenery was out of the question.

The lover of good wine will regard the lofty hill which produces the far-famed Hermitage with proper devotional feelings. It rises on the left bank of the Rhone, not far from Valence. Below it, but on the opposite side of the river, appear the hills of St. Peray, which grow the well-known wine of that name.

Having changed our garments and washed off all the impurities contracted on board the steamer, we sallied forth to see Valence, and, what was of more importance, to make arrangements to leave it. For it is a golden rule in continental travelling, where railways are not, and ignorance of the ways and means of locomotion abounds, that the traveller should make it his first business on entering a town to see how he is to get out of it. To devolve this to the garçon of the hotel will almost infallibly lead to mistakes. No doubt it

is a bore, when wearied and jaded, to leave comfortable quarters to go diligence-place hunting, but, unless blessed with a servant who may be depended on, it is far better to submit to the annoyance, than find, when you wish to start, that you cannot get a place.

In the present instance we had little or no difficulty in obtaining seats; for, wonderful to relate, there was actually an energetic competition going on between rival diligence proprietors. The walls were covered with huge placards, bearing representations of diligences seeming things of life that might run or fly, so light and airy was their paper build. While looking at these pleasant pictures, cards were thrust into our hands, setting forth the hours of departure and cost of conveyance to Grenoble. Knowing nothing of the contending parties, we turned into the nearest office, and engaged two seats in the banquette of a diligence that was to start at five A.M. the following morning, and which engaged to convey us to Grenoble by noon. The distance is fifty-six miles. The charge for each seat was five francs.

This accomplished, we walked through the town. Considering its antiquity, for it existed in the time of the Romans, by whom it was called Valentia, and was in the time of the latest western emperors a place of considerable strength, and a refuge to Constantine after his assumption of the purple in Britain, it is remarkable how few remains of the original buildings are yet to be found.

The cathedral, dedicated to St. Apollinaire, is an

interesting Romanesque edifice. The other public buildings are not worth notice.

There is one house, however, which, for external decoration, is so exceedingly beautiful that hours might be spent in examining it. Vaysse de Villiers, no mean judge of architectural works, pronounced it to be one of the richest specimens of Gothic architecture in France. It is a private mansion in the Grande Rue, and is at present in the occupation of a bookseller. The façade, which is very extensive, is literally covered with the most elegant florid tracery. The highest art is apparent in the exquisite designs which arrest the eye, and yet so admirably are all subdued to harmony that no one portion obtrudes itself on the eye more than another.

I was in hopes that the bookseller, who exhibited engravings as well as books in his window, would have an etching of his house. But not so. Nor had the idea of a drawing ever occurred to him. I ventured to suggest that a small engraving would meet with many purchasers. He appeared to approve the suggestion, and perhaps future visitors may be enabled to carry away a reminiscence of the house.

There is a fine view of the Alps from the Place, which has lately been adorned by a colossal statue in bronze of Champonnier, a noted general in Bonaparte's armies. We were too intent, however, on what gastronomers call the great business of the day, to dwell long on outward scenes, so we returned to

our hotel, where we found an excellent and well-appointed dinner awaiting us. It deserved to be honoured—and we did so by ordering a bottle of St. Peray, which, though creamy and mousseux, was not as satisfactory to the taste as to the sight.

The following morning we were at the diligence office precisely at the time appointed. There was no sign whatever of horses—and we cooled our heels for half an hour ere they made their appearance, so that it was nearer six than five when we started.

Immediately after leaving Valence, we entered the Val d'Isère. The road runs parallel to the river of that name, through an exceedingly fertile valley, which presents a continuous succession of vineyards and orchards. Bounding it to the right rose the Alps, which were gradually becoming more defined, and swelling into cloud-dwelling ramparts. Near St. Marcellin the road was alive with cattle which were about changing hands at a fair in that town. The streets were thronged with peasants in gaudy-coloured dresses. As we approached Grenoble, the luxuriance of the country increased.

Between Voreppe and that city lies the celebrated valley of Grésivandan, vaunted—and with much justice—as being one of the most productive and beautiful in France. Up to the line where the dark rocky precipices are set in the sloping sides of the vale, every portion is covered with crops: maize, corn, melons, hemp, fringe the road, and the ever-beautiful vine flings its graceful festoons from tree to tree.

It was like a flowing-over of Nature's gifts, and would have driven an English agricultural protectionist, who conceives that his own country cannot compete with that of the foreigner, half mad. A proverb is current at Tullins, a small town in the heart of this fertility, which runs—

Si le Dauphiné était un mouton  
Tullins en serait le rognon.

Our vicinity to the great fortress-town was made evident by our passing formidable parks of artillery, camped by the road side for the distance of many hundred yards. They belonged to the fortress, and formed a portion of the war *materiel* of the army of the Alps.

Contrary to our expectation, we were not asked for our passports on entering the gates of Grenoble, but were permitted to drive on to the diligence bureau. This was situated in the Rue Montgorge, in which are also the principal inns. As soon as we alighted from our cyrie, in the banquette, we were pounced on by the hotel touters, who were very solicitous to seize and carry us off to their establishments. We were puzzled to choose between the two first-class hotels, and our excellent friend Murray did little to help us out of the difficulty. For to the Hôtel des Trois Dauphins he gives the rather paradoxical character of 'good, but not very clean, and somewhat dear;' while of its rival, the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, he records that it is 'very good, and bread excellent.'

The reader may think that the latter recommendation would be sufficient to settle the point, but the bread weighed not an atom in the balance of our thoughts; for at all the hotels in the south of France, the bread is delicious. The Hôtel des Trois Dauphins possessed a great advantage over that of the ‘Ambassadeurs,’ by commanding a view of the fortress and public gardens, whereas the windows of the latter looked on the walls of the opposite houses in the street. Then it would be something to sleep under the same roof that had sheltered Napoleon; for it was at the Hôtel des Trois Dauphins that he lodged on his return from Elba.

So we threw up our caps in favour of the ‘Dauphins,’ and great was the triumph of the fat garçon of the hotel as he conducted us to his house.

We were met at the threshold by the smiles of a fair, fat, and forty landlady, who, in answer to my questions, stated that we could have bed-rooms looking frontwards.

She led us up stairs, and after inspecting two or three rooms, we selected two—one over the other—both large and well-furnished, and commanding delightful views.

Having the fear of the ugly words, ‘somewhat dear,’ before our eyes, I deemed it prudent to do a disagreeable thing on this occasion, and ask the price of the apartments. ‘Madam,’ said I, ‘you will, I trust, pardon me, but as it is stated in our guide-book that your charges are high, we should



like to know what they are?' Her answer was most satisfactory. The lowest bed-room was two francs a day, that above it one and a half; breakfast with coffee and eggs, one franc, with meat, two; and table-d'hôte dinner three francs.

We forthwith drew out our pencil, and opening the guide-book, erased the words, 'somewhat dear,' as appertaining to this hotel; and as our residence in it for some days gave no occasion to find fault, but many to be satisfied, we have submitted to the guider of wandering Englishmen, who I am well aware is anxious to hold the balance of justice evenly, the propriety of giving the Hôtel des Trois Dauphins a better character in his next edition of the 'French Hand-Book.' Lightly as the preceding lines have fallen from the pen, my heart was far from light when the scenes they describe were passing. For some days previously I had felt unwell, and as we entered Grenoble the strong hand of sickness laid hold of me. But I struggled to bear up as long as possible, though ardently desiring rest and quietude. Oh, how I blessed the invention of inns; those homes into which we can step out of the bustling world, meeting no cross looks and fearless of giving trouble. There is some truth surely in the lines—

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,  
Where'er his varied tour has been,  
It grieves him most to think he's found  
His surest welcome at an inn.

The change of climate from the coolness—almost

chilliness, I might say—of Auvergne, to the burning heat of Provence and Dauphiné, coupled with divers descriptions of diet, probably induced my illness. Old Burton said truly, that ‘strange meats and drinks cause notable alterations and distempers;’ and of the former many and curious varieties are to be found in the course of a tour in the south of France.

I had a strong conviction that the one thing needful to restore me to my usual good health was rest—to which I was disposed to add strong potations of tea. The former, however, was more easily obtained than the latter. For a luxurious looking bed with snow-white sheets at one side of my room invited rest, whereas the existence of tea in any shape at Grenoble was problematical. I determined, however, to try my fortune. Ringing the bell, it was answered by a *garçon d'écurie*, who apologised for usurping the place of the house *garçon*, giving as a reason that the latter was busily occupied waiting at a large dinner of military *grandees* in the salon. The *bonhomme* of my stable-waiter made ample amends for his rough exterior. I told him that I was ill and should like to have some tea. He could not tell whether there was any in the house, but he would inquire. He soon returned with the gratifying intelligence that his master had a ‘bottle full of tea,’ which he kept as medicine, and that he would be happy to give me some.

I ordered my attendant to bring me the necessary tea apparatus, for I knew that it would be rash to

let others prepare the beverage. He left the room, but quickly re-appeared to ask whether the water was to be hot or cold — a question which implied entire ignorance on his part of the art of tea-making. In course of time I succeeded in obtaining all the requisites, and as my last want was satisfied and the garçon saw the amber-coloured fluid flow into my cup, he exclaimed ‘*Enfin, Monsieur, j’espère que c’est selon votre fantaisie.*’

Heaven bless the man who made us acquainted with tea! His name should be world-famous, and yet it is utterly unknown; but he must have been a Dutchman, for the Dutch were the first to introduce the beverage to Europe. Who would have given the wide-breeched Schiedam-drinkers credit for such a thing? I followed the inward tea-application by a foot-bath. Here my groom of the stable was more at home. He brought me two capacious stable buckets; the one three-quarters filled with almost boiling water, the other with cold, so that I might have a temperature ‘*selon ma fantaisie.*’ And a fine steaming foot-bath I had. And having thus doctored myself, I crept into bed, where I soon became the prey of such a ‘*litigation of my senses,*’ that it would have puzzled the cleverest Egyptian Oneiromancist to have interpreted my swarms of dreams.

## CHAPTER XI.

I WOKE a new man. The morning air came into my room fresh and invigorating; balmy too, for the skies of Italy were not far off. The view was certainly striking. Immediately opposite were the public gardens, consisting of groups of venerable elm trees, which threw their branches high and wide, and shaded a broad promenade bordered by orange trees.

Sweet-smelling flowers filled and painted quaintly-shaped parterres, and among them were groups of 'bonnes,' with their charges of playful children.

At the opposite side of the river towered the stupendous fortress, a wonderful monument of engineering art, covering the steeps of Mont Rachet with a series of formidable batteries to the height of nearly one thousand feet.

All this was a more pleasing eye-study than dull walls, which alone can be seen from the 'Hôtel des Ambassadeurs.'

The bells of the numerous churches proclaimed the sabbath. In this call to prayer, the Protestant and Roman Catholic shake hands in good-fellowship. It is well, however, that the spirit of religion does

not abide in the harmony of bells, nor in the frequency or loudness of their ringing. If this were the case, Protestants would have but a poor chance with their more numerous Catholic brethren. I remember hearing the late Dr. Chalmers assert, that he knew the summons of a small chapel bell,—never musical, but rendered positively harsh by being cracked—far better responded to than the sweetest toned bell in the tower of the largest church of Edinburgh.

The air of Grenoble was harmonious with bells, the valves of the churches gaped wide, but the congregations were thin, consisting principally of women. The few men present were of the class of peasants. I entered several churches, and did not see a single gentleman. The shops throughout the town were open, and trading seemed to be in greater activity than during week days. The influence of the miraculous apparition at Salette, which I shall introduce to the reader presently, had evidently not extended to Grenoble.

There are few greater contrasts between the English and French nations than the deference paid by the former to the institution of the sabbath, and the almost total want of respect shown to it by the latter.

I was greatly struck, on my return to London after an absence of two months in France, by observing, as I was going to church on Sunday morning, a poor cobbler who literally lived in a stall. His narrow dwelling appeared closed; the little casement was

fastened by a shutter, and the door was only sufficiently open to admit air. But through the chink I saw a candle burning, although it was broad daylight, and looking closer, I discovered the fellow working diligently at his cobbling trade.

Now I do not imagine that this respectful homage to the national observance of the sabbath day was voluntary on the cobbler's part; I dare say, had his humble lot been cast in France, that he would have plied his calling on Sundays in open day; but the closed stall, and lighted candle, however brought about, were demonstrations of the national feeling, arising from a general wish to obey that Divine law which we hear weekly from the altar of our churches, that on the Sabbath 'Thou shalt do no manner of work.'

In the afternoon the bell-ringing was succeeded by a terrible *tapage*, proceeding from discordant trumpets and trombones attached to ambulating exhibitions, which had just anchored, to attend a fair then going on in Grenoble. The neighbourhood of the gardens presented a miniature Champs Elysées, as they flare on Sunday afternoons; and the gardens themselves were thronged by promenaders, among whom were some handsome women, attired in gay dresses. A magnificent military band, composed of sixty performers, played at the river extremity of the gardens. The scene was very animated, and had nothing in common with the 'tristesse' and distress which have pervaded several French towns since the late revolution.

We were greatly pleased with Grenoble. It is a charming city, well built, admirably situated, and possessing enchanting views. The public buildings, however, are not very remarkable. That which was formerly the Palace of the Dauphin, and which is now the Hôtel de Ville and Palais de Justice, is the most interesting. It possesses some delicious stone oriel windows of the Renaissance style, which will delight the architect.

There are several handsome fountains scattered throughout the town. Real, living, liberal fountains, sending their waters flashing beneath the sun-beams high into the air.

As a matter of course we visited the fortress. It is necessary to have permission from the commandant to enter it. The landlord sent the head garçon of the hotel with us to the commandant's office. The colonel who held the high appointment was out. His sergent-secretary was as stern and stiff as his unbending mustachios. According to him it was impossible to obtain the necessary order in the commandant's absence. We were turning away. 'Give him a franc,' whispered our guide in my ear. I felt half ashamed to offer the great and mighty sergent so small a sum. But our garçon knew his man. The franc was pocketed, and in a few minutes the sergent appeared with the order, which bore the commandant's name. Whether he had forged it or not I cannot say, but this I know, that we had very great difficulty in persuading the drawbridge-keeper to let

us pass. He was an old veteran, and lived in a house abutting on the bridge. The sentinel sent us to confer with him. After examining the pass, he pronounced it not 'en règle,' and that we had signed it. That, I said, was certainly not the case. Then he accused us of being spies,—Prussian, Austrian, Russian, Bavarian, Italian,—every country did he link us to but England, for he never imagined that we were English. I put a bold face on the affair, and told him if he did not let us pass I would report him to Monsieur le Commandant. This, he declared, would not affect him in the smallest degree. But the threat had evidently some weight, for after another scrutiny of the order he allowed us to enter the fortress. We thanked him, and passed on. Once within the walls, no restraint is imposed on the visitor; we were allowed to wander about where we pleased, unchallenged by the many sentinels whose bayonets gleamed on every bastion. It is a long and weary climb to the Bastille which forms the crowning battery, and which is so called from an ancient feudal castle, some portions of which remain amidst the modern works.

The ingenious devices to annihilate a contending foe are endless. We were well nigh lost among counterscarps, countersguards, ravelins, glacises, tenailles, tenaillons, parapets, ditches, moats, galleries, casemates, curtains, hornworks, lunettes, angles, entering angles, re-entering angles, and various other cunning stratagems proceeding from the inventive minds of Vauban



and other eminent military engineers. The construction of the works occupied more than fifteen years, and they have lately been very much strengthened. To see the many hundred cannon vomit forth their iron bolts on an army below, would be a terrific spectacle. A more pleasing one was to view the various-hued flowers, forming, in many instances, a net-work before the mouths of the happily silent messengers of destruction. May they long weave their spells of beauty unblackened by the smoke of gunpowder! Among a large and busy population of winged insects that were colouring the air, as they flitted to-and-fro with their gaudy wings, I recognised the *Mantis*, or praying insect, which is not uncommon in the south of France, but is not found in England. Nothing can exceed the beautiful delicacy of its transparent green wings, arching over its body like a tent. It derives its name from the prayer-like attitude which its long fore-legs assume when it seizes its prey. In Africa this insect is common. The Hottentots believe that the heads of persons on whom it alights are sacred.

After ascending steepes and steps, which seemed almost endless, we had the satisfaction of attaining the loftiest bastion. The view from this elevation is most glorious. At our feet lay Grenoble, wrapped in the gleaming folds of the Isère, which winds through a rich plain. Bounding this and the visual horizon, swelled a stormy sea of mountains, tossing their crests of foam on high. For a moment this image held good. But as we gazed, we saw that in

the tumultuary movements that enveloped them they were motionless. Huge shadows stalked across them as the clouds blotted out the isles of light. Their power was that of an enduring calm which no storms can disturb — a power majestic in its silence. Here Turner, whose brush of all men living alone truly conveys

The dread magnificence of heaven,

would have revelled. We longed to preserve, in a mimic scene, the gorgeous colouring of the clouds,— and yet, how great is the privilege given to man in the enjoyment of memory. Seated in the heart of great London, at the still hour of midnight, in my chair, chronicling these things, I close my eyes, and out of Cimmerian darkness dawn roseate hues broken by trembling shadows, — the mists are gathered up and the mountains lie unfolded, as seen from the fortress of Grenoble. The stubborn difficulties that assail the painter and vex his quick spirit are unknown to me. Breathe but the desire, vacuity becomes brilliant with rainbow hues, cinctures of mist girdle the mountain tops, ‘beauty pitches her tents before me,’ and sublimity slowly sails or settles in my imaginary cloud-land. The metaphysical subtlety of man’s spirit is a pearl to him of rare price.

We were told that on transparent, cloudless days, Mont Blanc can be seen in the form of a snowy mass, terminating the head of the Val d’Isère. When amidst the Alps one always longs to pay homage to their monarch; but I doubt much if the view

from the Bastille of Grenoble is so fine when the heavens are clear, as when clouds are robing and unrobing the mountain tops.

The fortress of Grenoble, with all its array of might, was once subdued by one man.

On the 7th of March, 1815, Napoleon Bonaparte, with his handful of adherents, appeared before it. He had slept at Corps the preceding night, and during his march from that place to Grenoble, had received various demonstrations of the fidelity of the people to his cause. Midway he met the first troops he had seen since landing at Cannes from Elba. They were commanded by a colonel who was expressly ordered to arrest Napoleon's march, and even to fire on him should he persist in proceeding. But before orders could be given, Napoleon had dismounted from his horse, and stepping forward, threw open his old familiar grey coat, and exclaimed—  
 'What, my friends, have you forgotten me? I am your Emperor. If there be a soldier among you who would kill his general—his Emperor—let him do it now—I am here!'

These words were received with an universal burst of 'Vive l'Empereur!' from soldiers and peasants. 'Would you have killed your petit caporal?' said Bonaparte, to a veteran whose arm was covered with chevrons. The old man's eyes filled with tears. 'See,' he said, ringing the ramrod in the barrel of his musket, 'the piece is not loaded. All the rest are the same.'

Thus successful, Napoleon continued his march to Grenoble. It was evening when he arrived before the fortress. The commandant, General Marchand, was a determined and resolute man. He immediately ordered the walls to be manned, the drawbridge to be raised, and the gates to be closed. Undaunted and undismayed, confiding in that wonderful good fortune which had so long befriended him, Bonaparte advanced alone, and stood before the batteries. It was a moment pregnant with the fate of thousands—of entire nations. For it was in the power of any one among hundreds of soldiers who looked on their former leader, to have severed his restless spirit from its mortal home. They were ordered to fire. But not a gun was raised; not a match was lighted. In vain did the commandant reiterate his orders. It was evident that the soldiers looked on him no longer as their superior officer.

They bore their darling on their shoulders into the town, amidst the huzzas of the inhabitants, carrying him to the Hôtel des Trois Dauphins, thereby making the house for ever famous. And ere the night closed, being unable to find the keys, they brought him the gates of the city, and reared them before the windows of his room. With the exception that the furniture is somewhat worn and faded, that room remains in precisely the same condition as when Napoleon occupied it. It is a large and handsome apartment. A tent-bed, with amber damask curtains, stands in the centre of one of the

sides. The sofas and chairs are covered with the same material as the curtains. The paper on the walls was once very handsome, but is now stained and spotted. Asking the cause of this, the landlady told us that the room being frequently retained by military men for dinners, the effervescing enthusiasm of the copious champagne libations poured on such occasions, in honour of the great Emperor produced the stains which we there saw.

It is very rare that Napoleon's apartment is unoccupied—parties write weeks beforehand to secure it. At the time of our sojourn in the hotel, it was tenanted by an eminent French actor, who was starring it at the theatre. It must be incense to the sentimental enthusiasm of a Frenchman to sleep in the bed in which Napoleon reposed for two nights.

The landlord is not slow in taking advantage of the desire to inhabit Napoleon's room. He charges six francs a night for it. But who can blame him? An English landlord would demand double that sum, and get it.

## CHAPTER XII.

IT was with no ordinary feelings that I threw open my window on the third morning of our sojourn at Grenoble, and gazed inquiringly at the face of heaven; for we had a pilgrimage in prospect, for which fine weather was particularly essential. This was a visit to the Grande Chartreuse. To see that celebrated monastery formed one of the chief objects of our tour. The unclouded sky wore an unmistakeable appearance of fairness. Had the azure vault been the dial-plate of a huge barometer, the needle would assuredly have pointed, 'Set Fair.' Our spirits rose immediately. Not that we were apprehensive of a 'juicy day.' In the latitude of Grenoble, and in summer time, such excursion spoilers are of very rare occurrence; but we were greedy, we wanted a perfect day,—

Cool, and calm, and bright,  
The bridal of the earth and sky;

and here was one. The delicious morning air came into our room pure and fresh, making existence happiness; and the mountain-girdling bastions of the fortress were pencilled with military precision against the deep blue sky, so transparent was the atmosphere.

It is always a difficult matter in France to coax an early breakfast out of the *cuisine* of an hôtel—by breakfast, I mean a sensible, honest, comforting English breakfast, that being eaten puts a man in good humour with himself and all the world, and fits him to go forth and do battle bravely. For my own part I make it a rule, from which I never swerve, excepting when the stern, strong hand of necessity compels me, never to adventure forth on my day's duties or pleasures without fortifying the inner man.

On the present occasion, after the usual amount of importuning, we procured a very satisfactory repast; having partaken of which, we felt equal to climbing the Grand Som itself.

There are two roads from Grenoble to the Grande Chartreuse—the one by Voreppe and St. Laurent, the other by Sapey. The former, though much the longer, is practicable as far as St. Laurent for carriages; the latter is a mere rough mule-path. We determined on going by St. Laurent and returning by Sapey. A small two-horse diligence leaves Grenoble every morning at seven during the summer months for the former village. In the *coupé* of this vehicle we had secured seats, and a few minutes after seven found ourselves, with some half-dozen ecclesiastics bound on the same pilgrimage, rolling out of the city of Grenoble. My neighbour in the *coupé* was a jolly-looking priest, savouring more of grease than Windsor soap, with an oily, happy countenance, showing that its possessor was in good humour with

himself, and at peace with all the world. I always make it a rule in my travels to follow the good advice of the Vicar of Wakefield—viz., to enter into conversation with all persons whom the accidents of travel may throw into my companionship, holding with the good Vicar, that if they fail to give useful information, or to afford entertainment, I may be of some service to them. Railways at home have interposed their iron din and discord between travellers, tying up their tongues; but in France, and particularly in the south of that country, where such *ways* are almost entirely unknown, the slow diligence affords every opportunity of making a bosom friend of your travelling companion ere parting from him.

So the reader will be prepared to learn that I soon opened a conversation with my neighbour the priest. Before starting, he had stowed in the sole pocket of the *coupé* a square-looking can of large proportions, which ever and anon engaged his especial care and attention; for as our jolting vehicle lumbered along, the said can swung to and fro in a manner not very conducive to its safety, if it were made of glass, or other brittle material. My curiosity was excited respecting it, and after various speculations, I came to the conclusion that it was a bottle containing *comfort* for my neighbour and his companions. The priest, however, quickly disabused me of this idea; for after expressing his hope that the vessel did not inconvenience me, he added,—



‘I am solicitous about it, for it is exceedingly precious, as it contains *miraculous water*.’

This announcement, far from allaying my curiosity, rather served to increase it; so I begged to be informed of the properties of the said water, and where it came from.

‘What!’ said the priest, ‘have you not heard of the miracle lately performed on the holy Mountain of the Apparition near Corps?’

I confessed my entire ignorance.

‘That is strange,’ said he. ‘Would you like to hear the history of it?’

‘Indeed I should,’ I replied; ‘and shall feel greatly obliged by your communicating it to me.’

The priest then related the following extraordinary story as our diligence was pursuing its way through the vale of Grésivaudan; and as the scenery more immediately connected with the Grande Chartreuse did not surround us until the priest had concluded, I think that I shall not err in making the reader a listener to the tale, which will, I feel certain, keep him awake whilst travelling along the flat road between Grenoble and Voreppe.

‘The scene,’ commenced the priest, crossing himself with much apparent devotion, ‘of this late miraculous manifestation of God’s grace to this sinful world, is a mountain of vast height, covered with snow during the greater portion of the year, which rises near the hamlet of La Salette, in the commune

of Corps and department of the Hautes Alpes. It requires four hours' continuous walking, to attain the summit of La Salette. The mountain, previous to the miracle, was known only to the peasants who live at its base, and whose flocks in summer time seek pasturage on it.

‘Last September, two children, brother and sister, named Macédoine and Mélanie Annans, the former twelve years of age, the latter fourteen, were tending some sheep belonging to their parents, who are humble peasants living in a cottage on the mountain-side. It was noon, the day was oppressively warm, and feeling tired and hot, they sought a spring near the summit of the mountain to quench their thirst. The fountain did not flow constantly, being frequently dry in the summer months. After drinking, they threw themselves on the grass, and fell into a profound sleep. How long they remained asleep they cannot state. They were woke by a rushing noise, and the rustling as it were of satin. On looking up, they beheld a woman seated on a stone, apparelled in white robes trimmed with lace, and bordered at the bottom by red roses. Her hair was dressed in plain bands; on her feet were white satin shoes, ornamented with gold buckles; and her hands were crossed on her breast. At the sight of this apparition the children were affrighted, and rose to run away.

‘‘Fear not,’ said the female, addressing them in their native *patois*; ‘I will not harm ye. Approach.’

‘Gathering courage from the gentle voice and meek appearance of the vision, whose face they represent as of angelic sweetness, the children drew near, but not without trembling.

‘‘My Son,’ said the mysterious form, ‘is sorely troubled at the wickedness of his people in this part of France. The Sundays are desecrated; blasphemy is common; evil deeds are of every-day occurrence. I have had great difficulty in arresting His avenging hand, nor have I entirely succeeded in doing so—for already your potatoes have been blighted. Be sure, if such things continue, that your corn will be destroyed, and your cattle will perish by disease.’

‘She then, rising from the stone on which she had been seated, took the children separately, and communicated to each a secret, commanding them not to reveal it until the proper time for divulging the mystery shall arrive. After this, she ascended very gradually out of sight; the boy says that he stretched forth his hand to clutch one of the roses on her dress, but that his hand passed through thin air. Slowly the vision faded from their sight, and at length disappeared.

‘The children straightway descended the mountain, and related the history of the apparition to their parents; these, who seem to be devoid of that superstition so frequently found among persons in their rank of life, severely reprimanded them for inventing what they regarded as at best an idle tale. The children, however, persisted in their story. The curé was then sent for. He listened attentively to the narrative, but

at first gave no credence to it; indeed, he reproved the children for their attempt to impose, as he thought, upon him and their parents. A separate examination of the boy and girl was instituted, and this elicited so uniform and unvarying an account, always accompanied by such strong protestations of sincerity and truth, that the curé's scepticism became somewhat shaken. Accompanied by the children, he visited the scene of the apparition. They pointed out the stone on which the figure had been seated; the fountain was overflowing with crystalline water—it had never done so before. The curé heard again, without a single deviation, the account originally given by the children. The result was, that he went down the mountain a believer, and announced himself as such. 'These children,' he said, 'have been singled out and made blessed; for to them has the holy Virgin Mary appeared, and she has made them the instruments of communication with us sinners.' The wonderful apparition, with its attendant history, was then described to the bishop of the diocese. He came, arrayed in his prelatical robes; saw the children; was conducted by them to the mountain-top; heard there the story of the vision; questioned each child apart; offered them a large sum of money to divulge their secret, which they refused, resisting all threats and arguments to make it known; and finally, having failed to shake their testimony in any way whatever, his grace avowed himself a believer in the miracle. This adhesion settled the doubts of wavering minds, though

the perpetual and abundant flowing of the spring had considerable influence in leading to the same result. This fact was, of course, eagerly seized on by religious enthusiasts, as confirmation strong as Scripture of the truth of the children's story. The spring was now regarded as holy, the water as miraculous, and not to be polluted by the hoofs of beasts. It was accordingly enclosed. The story of the apparition and the beatitude of the children was soon noised abroad. Bishops, priests, and curates came from far and near to see the children and the holy mountain; but neither the pomp nor terrors of the church, nor yet offers of large reward, had any effect in shaking their testimony, or causing them to divulge their respective secrets. 'The proper time for making them known,' say they, 'has not arrived; when it does, then will we speak.' The boy, who was wholly uneducated, is now in the hands of the curé of the parish, who is training him for the church. He is very modest, and is not inflated with pride at having been visited by the Virgin. 'Do you not consider yourself very much blessed by having seen the mother of Jesus?' said I to him. A careless '*Oui*,' was the only answer. The stone on which the Virgin is represented to have sat has been removed with much religious pomp to the parish church, where it is enshrined behind the high altar, and attracts thousands of peasants, who religiously and devoutly kiss it. The mountain, which a few months ago was trackless, and, as I have stated, almost unknown, is now visited

by hundreds of pilgrims, who prostrate themselves on the site of the apparition, and carry away bottles of the water.'

In this capacity had the priest visited it. For five successive days and nights had he travelled, pausing not, so great was his impatience to arrive on the holy ground. Wearied and almost exhausted, he hired a horse to ascend to the summit. The animal was most sorry, the path very bad. Ere long he came to a place which wore so alarming an appearance that he drew rein to dismount. 'Do not give yourself useless trouble,' said his guide; 'no accident *can* happen, none has occurred since the mountain became holy, nor has a cow or sheep perished.' So the priest, full of faith and belief, kept his seat, riding on the brink of frightful precipices unharmed. But his faith received stronger confirmation.

'My legs and feet,' said he, 'from five days and nights' continuous journeying, had become greatly swollen and inflamed. I bathed them in the ever-flowing fountain. As if by enchantment, but really by miraculous agency, for I sincerely believe that God has vouchsafed a miracle here,' (and as he said this he crossed himself again, to lend weight to his argument,) 'the swelling departed, the inflammation ceased, and I went up from the pool a renovated man. I had anticipated great comfort from a night's repose in bed, but all sense of fatigue had left me; and when I laid down last night it seemed to me that I had not lost a single night's rest, so fresh was I.

Wonder not, therefore,' he added, 'at my cherishing the water in this tin case; it came from the holy spring, and it is my intention to keep it as long as I live.'

I could scarcely forbear smiling, but the solemnity of the priest's manner curbed my rising levity.

'I do not ask you to believe in this miracle,' he said; 'but let me tell you that, be it true or not, great good has been effected by the general belief in it: for whereas the entire commune was formerly remarkable for irreligious and loose conduct, the peasantry now diligently attend church—the majority believing—some, if not believing, at least fearing that the wrath of God will visit them for their sins if they do not amend their lives; the sabbath-day is no longer one of toil; blasphemy is never heard; in fact, that part of France is now probably the most orderly and religious in the country.'

Such are the principal features relating to this wonderful story. The excessively simple manners of the children, their constant adherence to the same narrative, unembellished by startling accessories, which repeated questionings might naturally be expected to draw forth, coupled with their steady refusal in all cases to receive money, are circumstances which furnish strong presumptive evidence that they, or one of them, saw what they describe as a vision in their sleep. The representation of the Virgin ascending to heaven is a common picture in the houses of peasants in France; and it is well known that she is

always portrayed in robes either of white or some gay colour. Such a picture may have been present to the imaginations of the children during their sleep. Forms of gentleness and loveliness people our dreams, as well as foul shadows and phantoms from accursed realms; and who shall say that the spirit of man may not visit blessed scenes when his weary body is at rest? More than this we dare not write.

Some say that gleams of a remoter world  
Visit the soul in sleep; that death is slumber,  
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber  
Of those who wake and live.

The priest's story was of a nature to banish all sense of *ennui*. As he concluded, the diligence arrived at Voreppe, a small town standing at the entrance to the valley of Grésivaudan; here we turned off the high road, and immediately commenced the ascent of a very long hill, all the passengers walking. The scenery was enchanting, — large walnut-trees, studded with clustering fruit, hung over the road. Beneath, to our right, sloped lawny dells, surrounded by thick woods, beautifully green, and far above rose majestic peaks. On attaining the summit of the hill, the horses were refreshed by a trough-full of rye-bread, cut into slices, and sundry bottles of wine! which they drank with great avidity. Our route now lay across an upland, skyey plain, fringed by dark forests and the everlasting mountains. Several large stone crosses



of superior workmanship dotted the road side,—fit accompaniments to the scenery and to our pilgrimage. Our neighbour priest crossed himself when he came in sight of them, and asked whether it was true that our aristocratic protestant government forbade crosses to be erected in England. I assured him that there was no let or hindrance to their erection; and that if he visited England, he would find a large class of protestants as fond of this symbol as Roman catholics.

At length we arrived at St. Laurent, a small village, boasting, however, a decent hotel, where our fellow-passengers breakfasted, and we dined. The hour was not the most fashionable for this meal, being only twelve o'clock; but we had breakfasted early, and had a presentiment, which turned out to be correct, that our repast, consisting as it did of excellent meat and vegetables, would be the best that we should have for some twenty-four hours. At one o'clock we buckled on our knapsacks, and, staff in hand, started for the Grande Chartreuse. No guide, happily, is necessary; the clear beryl-hued stream, Guiers Mort, which comes down the defile, acts as such, for the path rarely strays far from it, being carried along its left bank. We soon left behind us the dwellings of social men, and passed from broad glaring daylight into the gloom of the forest, presenting all that boundless confusion of stems so charming to the eye:—

The pathway narrows as the steps ascend;  
The boughs o'erarching meet in fond embrace;  
The fragile branches of the birch-tree bend,  
And with majestic chesnuts interlace.

Just as we entered the woody jaws of the gorge we met two monks clad in white serge robes, whom we imagined to be Carthusians; they were not, however, of that order, but Dominicans returning from the Chartreuse. As we learnt afterwards, the inmates of the convent seldom wander so near the habitations of their fellow-creatures.

With every step scenes of grandeur opened out, increasing in sublimity as we ascended. At Fourvoirie, about a mile and a half from St. Laurent, an iron forge, conceived and erected in the true spirit of picturesqueness, stands near two bridges which bestride the stream; here confined between vertical rocks of great height, at the base of which it rushes and foams, and then subsiding in pools beneath, reflects in glassy quiet the overhanging rocks. Near the highest bridge the grim chasm is blocked up by a house and gateway, through which the road is carried. In the palmy seignorial days of the Carthusians, ere the French Revolution of 1792 broke in upon them, this building served as a defence, and was strictly guarded. Now the traveller passes through the portal as free as the breeze which sweeps down the glen. Then the road admitted the passage of vehicles; now it is in a state of decay, shattered by winter storms, and encumbered by huge rocks, so that the rudest car could not travel on it; and even mules, with all their goat-like ability

of locomotion, find some portions of the path rather impracticable. But the way is in admirable keeping with the scenery; and for our part, we would rather have arrived at the convent a little more foot-bruised and weary by such a path, than by a fairer and smoother road, involving a sacrifice of the wild and romantic. With the feelings of a pilgrim strong upon us, we walked slow, passing lingeringly on, for the scenery amidst which we moved was not of a nature to be hurried through. The sketch-book was often in requisition; indeed, so greatly was my companion charmed with the scenery that he remained behind to make some finished sketches. As the sun declined, the day became more solemn and serene, and, if possible, more propitious. Vast trees now forming huge leafy domes, now making a vegetable network through which the dark blue vault of heaven gleamed, overshadowed the path; beech-trees started from their rocky crevices, their trunks covered with velvet-like moss; on high, at a prodigious elevation, pines—those black knights of the forest—appeared bristling on peaks inaccessible to man. There they stood—nature's flag-staffs—thousands of feet above the vale. Avalanches yearly come down crashing amidst their serried ranks, hurling hundreds from their rocky homes: tempests torment and torture them, but ever slowly, though surely, the work of destruction is repaired. For on the wings of the wind the feathered seed of this tree is borne from forests occupying the depths of the valley; and where

a seed is wafted and remains, there a tree grows,—on rocky ledges, where no chamois could rest; on pinnacles, where an eagle could scarcely find footing. In this silent though vast operation of nature—for the results are gigantic—how grand and instructive a lesson lies! Here is one of the many beautiful workings of an Almighty Creator, which strike forcibly on the senses during Alpine wanderings, bringing man into closer communion with his God. The beech-woods which occupy the depths of the valley are inhabited by a dark race of men, exercising the calling of charcoal-burners; and files of mules laden with large sacks of charcoal came down the rugged path, disputing with the pilgrim every inch of practicable ground. On, still on, higher and higher, the rocks now crowded around me, affording at intervals terrifying glimpses of the torrent which foams and roars several hundred feet beneath. After walking some two hours, I crossed the Guiers, by a narrow wooden bridge without parapets, and ascending the craggy path, here hewn out of the rock, came in half-an-hour to a gateway, gateless, and jammed between two vertical rocks of stupendous height, which approach to within a few feet of each other. One of these rocks is in the form of an obelisk, and is called the Pain de Sucre. This gateway is remarkable as defining the former limits of female *ascendancy*, for beyond it no women were allowed to pass. Whether, like St. Kevin, St. Bruno and his followers hurled unfortunate, erring, loving, or curious maidens, who

may have been caught out of bounds, over the beetling precipices is not recorded, but it is certain that no woman was permitted to go nearer the convent than this gateway. Beyond the portal, on a fragment of rock projecting over the chasm, was a cross, on which I read the words, rudely carved, 'VIA CÆLI;' and some few yards further was another cross, bearing the short sentence, 'O SPES UNICA!' These were evidences that the Grande Chartreuse was not very distant, and I learned from a peasant who was descending, that the object of my pilgrimage might be attained in half-an-hour's sharp walking, but I preferred sauntering on. From this man, the sole wandering speck of humanity that I met since leaving Fourvoirie, I heard that a huge peak, domineering grandly over a host of others, was called the 'Throne of Moses.' Truly the prophet chose a fitting seat, if from this peak he delivered his revelations.

The valley, or defile rather, now turned abruptly to the left. Still ascending, and passing through gloomy groves, I at length saw the turrets of the Escorial of the Alps, as the Grande Chartreuse has not inappropriately been called, which extended in a long broken line, backed by a woody amphitheatre, and terminated by spires of rocks and promontories rising to, and sometimes lost in, the clouds. The dark gorge, with its roaring torrent, now gave place to scenes of sacred and profound calm; for the convent stands on the gentle slope of an emerald meadow—an ark of peace, as it were, resting amidst

scenes of desolation. With Tasso, I was tempted to exclaim,—

Ecco apparir Gerusalem si vede;

and casting myself on a flower-enamelled bank, I gazed long on the scene. Before me, in solitary grandeur, rose the convent, bristling with spires and turrets; a town in extent, and yet silent as the grave; no hum of voices, no hurrying to and fro; not a human being appeared—all was hushed in death-like stillness. I was awed by the scene; and as I drew near to the gates and rang the deep-toned bell, I felt as a novice praying to be admitted within the holy walls. The gates were opened by a servitor, who announced my arrival to a Carthusian advanced in years, and of venerable mien. He was the *pharmacien*, and occupied rooms to the right of the gateway. By him I was conducted across a quadrangle watered by two fountains, to a large building appropriated to the reception of visitors. At the entrance he rang a bell, which was answered by a monk, young and handsome, reminding me strongly of Mario when personating the impassioned Fernando, in the affecting opera of *La Favorita*. My reception was courteous and warm. ‘I have come,’ said I, ‘a long way to see you—from England.’ The Carthusian seized my hand. ‘We are always glad,’ he replied, ‘to welcome your countrymen to the Grande Chartreuse.’ Then conducting me along an arched aisle, he threw open a door leading into a large and lofty apartment. It bore the inscription, *Salle de France*, and was appro-

priated to the reception of visitors. The furniture was of the simplest order: a plain deal table, with benches round it, occupied the centre of the room; a few presses were ranged against the wall, and some wooden chairs were placed at inhospitable distances from each other. A huge fireplace yawned at one side of the room, comfortably filled with pine logs; and over the chimney-piece was suspended a copy of the regulations for the governance of visitors. There are other rooms, similar in all respects to that I have just described, which are set apart for strangers, and named after the principal nations of Europe; but now that the monks have fallen to a low estate, one is generally sufficient to contain the guests. Proceeding to one of the cupboards, the monk drew forth a dark green bottle, from which he poured a liquid into a small glass. This was the celebrated '*Chartreuse*,' a liqueur, for the manufacture of which the monks are famed. Justly, too, for it is excellent. Its composition is kept a profound secret. It is said, however, to have for its basis spirits of wine, and to be flavoured with various aromatic herbs, which the monks gather in the lawns and groves surrounding the convent. The label attached to the flasks containing the liqueur sold at Grenoble, represents the monks culling herbs for the manufacture of the cordial. There are three qualities: *ordinaire*, which is that usually sold at Grenoble; *supérieur*; and *l'élixir*, which latter is used as a medicine for every inward and outward ailment. In taste the '*Chartreuse*' resembles maraschino, but it is

more aromatic. A more delicious drink on a hot summer's day, than a small glass of this liqueur in a tumbler of spring water, cannot well be conceived. As the grateful beverage flowed over the papillæ of my parched tongue, I could not help rejoicing that no silly vow of total abstinence from all good things in the form of liquids had ever passed my lips. Learning that it was my wish to sleep in the convent, the monk led the way to a small cell, lighted by a narrow casement, opening on a long passage. It contained a pallet, a deal table, on which stood a ewer and basin, and a crucifix. This was to be my dormitory. Everything was scrupulously clean; but, as will be seen, no attempt was made to minister to more than absolute requirements. There are some two hundred cells, similarly fitted up for those who wish to pass the night in the convent. My friend and myself were not the only visitors: about a dozen persons had arrived before us, and with them we were conducted over the gloomy wonders of the Grande Chartreuse. Passing down a corridor which stretched away till the perspective nearly met, we were shown the chapter-house, a large hall where the meetings of the order, of which this convent is the head, are held. Round the walls are portraits of distinguished Carthusians, and paintings representing celebrated events in the history of the order. A marble statue of St. Bruno stands at the upper end of the hall.

After visiting other rooms, we emerged at the entrance of the longest corridor, an arched passage



670 feet long, along which windows scantily distributed admitted a pale, solemn light, just sufficient to render objects picturesquely indistinct. Our monk, who acted as guide, unlocked the ponderous iron gates leading to this aisle, above which a board bore in large characters a notice requesting the visitor to tread softly and speak low whilst within the corridor, that the monks might not be disturbed at their devotions. The cells occupied by these ascetics are entered from this and another corridor parallel to that in which we were. They are of the simplest possible construction—a pallet, a table, and chair, comprising the material furniture; while the spiritual consists of a few religious books, a skull, and a crucifix. A small garden is attached to each cell. Standing within the narrow bounds of one of these voluntary prison-houses, the line,—

Man wants but little here below,

was forcibly brought to mind; and it is no licence to add, in the case of the Carthusians,—

Nor wants that little long.

And that they may be the more constantly reminded of death, the cemetery containing the bodies of their departed brethren is situated between the corridors. A turn-table in the wall enables each monk to receive his frugal fare of herbs without communicating with the bearer. On each cell door is a religious sentence. Pausing a few minutes, I read these:—  
‘He alone is wise who leaves this world for God.’  
‘In solitude only can God be worshipped.’ ‘The

life of the world is full of folly and wickedness.' 'In the cross is my only hope.' And on more than one door I saw inscribed the words of the Psalmist, thus rendered in our beautiful version :—' Stand in awe, and sin not : commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still.'

These are truly emblematic of Carthusian life and Carthusian belief. The church is a perfectly plain building, having twenty stalls on either side of the altar, which are set apart for the monks. It was refreshing, after visiting these gloomy and almost sepulchral abodes, to enter the library. This is a large room, containing some five thousand volumes. Let it not be supposed, however, that the visitor would find light reading here for a rainy day. The tomes are ponderous, and typical of their contents—huge worm-eaten folios stuffed with theological lore, unrelieved by gay illuminations. There is no work of rare value, nor any precious manuscript, in the library. Not that I am warranted in making these assertions from personal examination, for I am not a grubber in the dust of centuries, preferring much to leave it in hallowed and undisturbed repose, but I do so on the authority of our guide.

There was one monk in the library, a magnificent figure, bending with turned-back cowl over a volume, the rays of the setting sun falling upon his close shaven head. He spoke not, stirred not, and we entered and left the apartment quite unheeded by him.

We were now conducted to a small chapel, adorned with fresco paintings and statues wholly at variance with the rigid simplicity of the Carthusian church and worship. It is dedicated to St. Louis, and is thus ornamented in commemoration of a visit made by Louis XIV. to the convent.

The kitchens, cellars, vaults, &c., form a perfect underground wilderness, chilly and dismal—moanings, many-tongued, were heard fitfully, as the gusty wind swept through the murky depths, and it required no great effort of the imagination to fancy that the sounds proceeded from the uneasy spirits of deceased Carthusians.

The monk, having now concluded his office of *cicerone*, glided away like a ghost to his lonely cell, leaving us to our thoughts and devices to pass the time until six o'clock, at which hour we were promised dinner. We occupied the interval in making a sketch of the front of the convent; an excellent bird's-eye view of the entire buildings, with the surrounding wall, which girdles them fortress-fashion, is attained from a small pavilion perched cyrie-like in the forest, at a considerable elevation: but this is no view for the artist's purpose. From here the Grand Som, the highest peak of the throng that rise above the Chartreuse, is seen to great advantage. On its summit a crucifix eighteen feet high has been placed, but so great is the elevation of the mountain, that the symbol of religion is hardly discernible from the Chartreuse by the unassisted eye. A vast panorama

of Alpine peaks, including the monarch Mont Blanc, may be seen from the Grand Som; but the ascent is tedious and difficult, and the days rare that mists and vapours do not shroud these mountains of the Grande Chartreuse.

Our dinner was a very meagre affair; thin watery soup, potatoes, omelets, and herbs, forming the component parts. We had no reason to expect better fare, nor, indeed, did we; but unfortunately our appetites had rebelled, refusing to be kept under mental subjection, and visions of smoking platters of beef very unromantically came across us in tantalizing contrast with the shadowy and unsatisfactory repast set before us. However, two, or it may have been three, glasses of the delicious *Chartreuse*, administered as a *chasse-dîner*, worked wondrously, and forming a semicircle round the enormous fireplace, whose hearth was now blazing with aromatic pine, we began to think as we watched the aureate particles—some swimming, some sinking quiveringly through the oily and luscious liquor—that we had not dined so badly after all. Having read in one of Gray's letters, in which he gives a very brief account of his visit to the Grande Chartreuse in 1791, that an album was then in existence containing various effusions, in all languages, of prose and poetry, by different travellers, the perusal of which amused his evening hours, we asked the handsome monk who waited on us if such a book existed. He answered that the album, consisting of four volumes, had been destroyed at the Revolution of 1792.

This was a great disappointment, for the reader who has spent a night at the Great St. Bernard, will remember how interesting the numerous albums in that convent are, and how well they serve to while away an hour.

We ventured to observe to the monk that it would be well to open another album, instancing that at the St. Bernard, but the proposal found no favour in his esteem. The present race of monks seem to be much stricter than their predecessors in Gray's time. Then, the Grand Prieur, or révérend Père, as he is styled, conversed with the visitors; now, he is never seen by them; and how studiously all intercourse with the world is shunned, the following attests. At my last visit to the St. Bernard, whose monastery, though set in eternal ice and snow, is a house of gaiety and pleasure compared with the Grande Chartreuse, the head Chanoine obligingly gave me his autograph on a blank leaf of my guide-book. This volume was now my companion, and I asked the monk in waiting to request his superior to place his autograph under that of the St. Bernard monk. He thought that the révérend Père could not object, so he carried the book to him; but he knew not his man: Dom Jean Baptiste, *alias* Casimir Montesi,\* the head of the Carthusians, refused to write his name, giving for reason that such an act

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\* All the monks assume a religious name on becoming Carthusians.

would bring him into contact with the world, which was entirely antagonistic to his religion!

As no album was forthcoming, our party, numbering some fifteen Frenchmen, besides ourselves, commenced a conversation which turned principally on Carthusian religion and its philosophy; but our talk did not extend far into the night, and ere the clock struck nine, one after another had departed to his cell, tired and sleepy, and my friend and I were left alone in the vast hall.

And there, before the huge cavernous fireplace, in which the pine logs were blazing fierce and bright, we sat in a musing mood. Our object in sitting up was to attend the midnight church service, and while waiting for the bell to summon us, out of some musty black-letter tomes with which the monk favoured me, I thus fashioned the history of the Grande Chartreuse.

St. Bruno, the founder of the Carthusian order, was borne at Cologne in 1030. His family were noble, and of very ancient descent. He was educated for the church, and early acquired great celebrity for his profound learning and deep piety. The chapter of Rheims wished to create him archbishop, but he declined, choosing a more retired life as professor of theology in the University of Paris. While in that city he attended the obsequies of his friend and companion, Raymond, canon of Paris, whose life, to all appearance, had been devout and exemplary, and of whom it is traditionally related, that just as the priests, who were chanting the office for the

dead, had come to the words *Responde mihi*, the corpse burst its grave-clothes, and rising on the bier, exclaimed three several times—‘I have been arraigned at the bar of God’s justice: my final sentence is past, and I am condemned by the just judgment of God to eternal damnation.’

This awful spectacle had such an effect on Bruno, that he, with six other spectators of the scene, resolved to retire from the world, arguing that if a man so eminent for piety as the deceased Raymond was yet found unworthy of salvation, they could have no hope unless every hour were spent in prayer and abstinence from the world and its frivolities. They consequently sought some desert place in which to pray and fast out their lives. This story, much as it is needed to account for the resolve of Bruno and his companions, is repudiated as an idle fable by contemporary theological writers, and was erased from the Romish breviary by authority of Pope Urban VIII. Pure love of asceticism is represented by these authorities as having instigated Bruno and his friends to retire from the world. Be this as it may, the party certainly left Paris, and journeyed to Grenoble. There they saw Hugues, bishop of that city, and were conducted by him to a savage wilderness most difficult of access, surrounded by vast mountains and gloomy forests. This was in exact accordance with their desires, and here they resolved to live. They built a small oratory with rude cells, in which they dwelt, and supported existence by herbs

gathered in the neighbouring forests. The site of this first settlement, which is about two miles higher in the mountains than the present convent, was called *Cartuse*, from a hamlet at some distance of that name, from whence sprung *Chartreuse*, which grew into the designation of the order, as the term Carmelites is derived from Mount Carmel.

Old writers, lovers of mystical and typical forms, lay great stress on the number of seven hermits. They declare that, on the eve of their entering Grenoble, Bishop Hugues dreamt that he saw seven stars falling at his feet, which afterwards climbed over divers mountains, and then stood still in a certain horrid and obscure place; and they observe,—‘These are the seven angels with the seven trumpets, to declare war and destruction to the sinful world; the seven steps that were seen in Ezekiel’s vision; the seven candlesticks to enlighten the world; and the eyes of the Lamb.’

The inhabitants of the desert increased—not by the original pilgrims taking unto themselves wives, for woman was from the first forbidden fruit, but because others, willing and desirous to forsake the world, joined them. A more commodious place of worship was built, a portion of the forest cleared and turned into gardens and meadows, and, lastly, a monastery on the site of the present building was erected. But these changes brought about no alteration in the austere manner of living of the inmates. Clad in hair shirts and a white woollen robe, with shaven head and bare feet,



they spent their lives in separate cells, rigidly adhering to abstinence from all kinds of meat, and eating only herbs. Fifty years after their establishment as a religious order, Peter the Venerable writes of them,—‘They are the poorest of all monks—the sight of their attenuated bodies and faces alone is frightful. Their garments are rough hair, their food bitter herbs eaten once daily, their occupation prayer and copying manuscripts.’

No marvel that on such fare the Carthusians were and continue to be of the leanest kind. But the whole tribe of monks is lean. ‘Fat priests,’ says Mr. Curzon in his *Visits to Monasteries in the Levant*, ‘are to be found, but I do not remember having ever seen a monk whom a New Zealander would think worth looking at.’

The invention of printing must have been a severe blow to the Carthusians, as it deprived them of their chief occupation. Enjoined to strict silence, the tedium of their lonely hours, doubtless, was greatly relieved by copying and illuminating missals. In the Scriptorium they produced many of those exquisite works which are among the chief ornaments of large continental libraries, and of which we have some magnificent examples in the British Museum. Dom Guignes was the first to reduce their rules to writing; they may be summed up in a few lines:—To pray constantly in their cells, to fast often, to keep numerous and long night watches, to attend with great punctuality and unerring regularity the

offices of the church, and to abstain from conversation. Silence has always been a distinguishing feature of the Carthusian order. Montesquieu, who was no lover of monasteries or monks, declares in his works that the Carthusians are so silent that they must have submitted to the operation of having their tongues excised.

The rules for novices are even stricter. Mabillon, in his *Acta Sanctorum*, dwells long and strongly on the duties of these men before they are suffered to enter the Carthusian community; and Dom Jancelinus gravely tells of a novice, whose strength probably failing in the hard hour of trial, had neglected to perform some of the severe duties imposed on him by the rules; his short-comings were discovered by the image of the Virgin turning her back on him when invoking her protection. These are the words: —‘*Imago ipsa visibiliter se regyrans, suum conspicienti novitio dorsum vertit.*’ The poor wretch was scourged and driven forth upon the world.

But with all this strictness it is remarkable that, excepting in minor points, the leading rules for the governance of the Carthusians were so admirably framed that they have never required alteration. By them are the Carthusians now governed; and Voltaire, cynical as he is, admits that they were the only ancient order who never wanted reform, and who knew no sovereigns but by the prayers in which they inserted their names. But Voltaire was a decided enemy to monkish rules. In his *Discours sur l’Homme*

he administers the following wholesome rebuke to ascetics:—

Malgré la sainteté de ton auguste emploi,  
C'est n'être bon à rien, de n'être bon qu'à toi.

It is remarkable that Bruno should have ended his days far from the chosen scene of his retirement. In 1089 he was persuaded to go to Rome by Pope Urban VIII., for the purpose of giving his Holiness the benefit of his counsels on matters of church discipline, but soon becoming disgusted with the dissipations of the pontifical court, he obtained permission to go to Calabria, where, in the solitudes of Della Torre, he founded a second Chartreuse, which he governed with the same integrity and piety as marked his rule over the original foundation. There, surrounded by his disciples, he died on the 6th October, 1101. Gregory XV. ordered solemn masses to be said in every church for the repose of his soul, and inscribed his name in the catalogue of saints.

Unlike many other establishments, which, deprived of their acting and efficient head, decay, the Chartreuse increased in celebrity. Numbers of pious men hastened to join the order, and rich men endowed it with their possessions. As years rolled by, the accommodation for the Carthusians was periodically increased. Centuries passed, and we find no relaxation in the original discipline, but rather that it increased in strictness. The bones of the ancient Carthusians, says Dom Innocent le Masson, in his *Disciplina Ordinis Cartusiensis*, written in 1697, were the bones

of well-formed men; ours are not larger than those of youths. Men full of pity and compassion prayed the Pope to order the monks to remit their severity in respect of diet. Hearing which, the Carthusians straightway produced some of their brethren, seventy and eighty years old, as convincing testimony that their mode of life could not be very fatal to longevity. 'We have abstained so long from meat,' they said, 'that we could not now eat it with impunity.' In one point, however, they gave way. It was the custom for each monk to be copiously bled five times each year; one of these operations was discontinued, thus reducing the annual bleedings to four.

In the course of time a magnificent monastery was founded, which became the head of 272 Carthusian establishments in various parts of Europe.\* Four of these were devoted to women; and it is recorded, that in three of them, out of consideration to the sex, the rules enjoining silence were considerably relaxed.

The Grande Chartreuse was now at the zenith of its power and fame. Though frequently destroyed

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\* The Charter House in London was originally a Carthusian convent, whence its name is derived. It was founded by Sir Walter de Manny. At its dissolution, in the reign of Henry VIII., its annual revenue was estimated at 642*l*. The prior was required to renounce the pope's supremacy and acknowledge the king; but he preferred losing his life, and was executed. Thomas Sutton, a man of immense wealth, purchased it and the adjoining lands in 1611, and founded the Charter House. Bacon appears to have been inimical to

by fire, which, from the roof being of wood, spread from building to building with unextinguishable rapidity, the convent rose again, phoenix-like, from its ashes. But a more grievous enemy than fire attacked the monks of the Grande Chartreuse, in common with those of other institutions. This was the Emperor Joseph II., who deprived the various monastic establishments of their revenues, under the pretence of devoting them to the increase of parochial clergy. But the treasures thus wrested from the innocent monks were soon swallowed up in the insatiable vortex of ambition, or wasted in the chicanery of official embezzlement.

The Revolution of 1792 finally completed the spoliation of the Chartreuse.

It was not to be expected that the unchecked and irresponsible governors of that stormy and unhallowed period, who forbade public worship, and held that the foulest animal on earth was a priest, would leave the Carthusians in quiet possession of their property. This was entirely stripped from them, and the con-

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the design. In a letter to King James, published in Herne's *Domus Carthusiana*, he writes, 'I wish that this mere mass and chaos of a good deed were diverted rather to a solid merit and durable charity, than to a blaze of glory that will but crackle a little in talk and quickly extinguish.' And he concludes by hoping that 'the mass of wealth, which was in the owner little better than a slab or heap of *muck*, may bespread your majesty's kingdom to many fruitful purposes, your majesty planting and watering, and God giving the increase.'

vent only escaped destruction because no purchaser could be found for its materials.

The monks are represented as having been excellent landlords, managing their estates prudently, and acting with great justice towards their tenants. In those days between 8000 and 9000 men visited the convent annually, and were entertained without any remuneration being asked or expected.

At present a small charge is made to each visitor, sufficient merely to pay the cost of his entertainment. The principal income of the monks is derived from the sale of the Chartreuse liqueur, of which about 50,000 francs' worth is sold annually. In their manufacture of liqueur the Carthusians follow the example of the monks in the Greek monasteries, where arrack is distilled by one or more members of each establishment.

From the earliest foundation of the order it was held unlawful to contemplate woman. The rules relating to her run thus:—

‘ Nous ne permettons jamais aux femmes d’entrer dans notre enceinte, car nous savons que ni le sage, ni le prophète, ni le juge, ni l’hôte de Dieu, ni ses enfans, ni même le premier modèle sorti de ses mains, n’ont pu échapper aux caresses, ou aux tromperies des femmes. Qu’on se rappelle Salomon, David, Samson, Loth, et ceux qui ont pris les femmes qu’ils avoient choisies, et Adam lui-même, et qu’on sache bien que l’homme ne peut cacher du feu dans son sein sans que ses vêtemens soient embrasés, ni mar-

cher sur des charbons ardents sans se bruler la plante des pieds.'

More gallant, however, than the monks of old, the present race allow women to approach close to their convent, though not to enter it. A house in the neighbourhood belonging to a peasant has been provided with a few beds for the convenience of the fair sex. Here the ladies sleep, while their husbands, or male friends, occupy cells in the convent. As I was passing the former building on my way to the Chartreuse before dinner, a lady accosted me, and begged me to deliver a message to her husband, lamenting her inability to see him. Despite the severe regulations, however, women, in the exercise of that curiosity which animates them to many a daring deed, have not only entered the Grande Chartreuse, but have passed a night there. They have contrived to do this by being disguised in the garments of the rougher sex, and arriving in the dark at the convent with a party of men, and thus escaping observation, they have departed at a very early hour the following morning. Detection is only to be feared from two or three monks, as not more than that number mingle with the visitors. Very recently the Prince and Princess Doria Pamphilia visited the Chartreuse. The Prince bore a letter from the Pope to the révérend Père, in which his Holiness craved permission for the Princess to sleep within the convent. 'I do not demand this,' said the missive, 'but I trust that my request may be complied with.' But the révérend Père was inflexible, sternly

refusing not only to allow the Princess to pass the night under the Carthusian roof, but even to set her foot within the porch. This refusal so exasperated the Prince, that although the monks gave *him* the warmest welcome, he turned his back upon them, and, shaking the dust from his feet, retraced his steps without loss of time with his princess to Grenoble.

But who shall say that some of the monks may not even now cherish, in defiance of all good resolutions, a fire within them which burns, if it does not consume? Some one there may be among them who has fled,—not from the world, but from the unkindness of one without whose love the world ceased to possess attractions; but who is remembered as radiant with loveliness and beauty—charms which, though fleeting in reality, are yet ever present to the absent lover. Who can say that such *spirits* may not haunt the lonely cells of the lonely Carthusians?—

For there are spirits of the air  
And genii of the evening breeze;  
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair  
As star-beams among twilight trees.

And that, in the words of Eloisa to Abelard, the poor wretch may not despairingly cry to the haunting vision?—

Oh, fly me, fly me, far as pole from pole!  
Rise Alps between us, and whole oceans roll;  
Ah, come not, write not, think not once of me,  
Nor share one pang of all I feel for thee.

But, hark! the deep-toned bell startles the midnight echoes. It calls the monks to their devotions.



Lamp in hand, we passed along the dark, cold corridors, and pushing open a door, entered a gallery commanding the church. Forty monks, the number at present in the convent, were already in their stalls, each with a lantern before him, the light of which fell on their missals, and dimly illumined the building. They were chanting the Psalms; a long, lugubrious chant, rarely interrupted, which the most rigid Genevese Calvinist could not have found fault with and condemned as ‘lust of the imagination.’ We caught the words, ‘*Bonum mihi quia humiliari me ut discam justificationes tuas:*’ words most appropriate to the Carthusians.

During some parts of the service the monks threw back their cowls and knelt. Then the light from the lanterns fell full on their faces, pale and sad, impressed with deep, dark lines of grief and melancholy. Gazing on them, we felt that the sun of their life had set for ever; that, in the words of Virgil,—

*Nec morti esse locum;*

and that existence was but

A heavy chain,  
Lengthening behind, with many a link of pain.

Disappointed ambition seemed written on many of their features. And, contemplating the scene, we thought of Bacon’s words, that ‘ambitious men often become melancholy, and voluptuous men turn monks,’ and half-wondered whether they would apply to the kneeling forms before us.

We turned from the mournful scene, and sought

our humble cell. Reasonable beings, I argued, surely cannot imagine that heaven can be won only by such a course of life as Carthusian laws prescribe: but Reason is not unfrequently driven from her seat by them. The monks sometimes go mad. Long after I had laid down, the chanting was borne with the sighs of the night wind through the corridors; and it was still in my ears when I passed from the Grande Chartreuse into the land of dreams.

It would be ungracious to leave unrecorded the comfort and cleanliness of my lonely couch—lonely in the most comprehensive sense, for no insect gave me its companionship. But according to an old writer who visited the Chartreuse in 1697, the Carthusians enjoy a singular impunity with respect to vermin. He says: ‘*C’est une chose admirable que ces religieux ne sentent jamais de punaises quoy que partout aillieurs il y en ait une grande quantité.*’

On awaking in the morning I was sensibly reminded of our elevated position, for it was very cold; not, however, so cold as to freeze the water in the ewer, as is not unfrequently the case at the St. Bernard. The monks were again chanting. Had they passed the entire night thus? Not so; it was six o’clock, and they were at matins. Before breakfast we visited St. Bruno’s Chapel, a charmingly picturesque building, standing amidst pines whose mighty stature bespeaks remote antiquity. Here is the scene of St. Bruno’s retirement from the world; beneath the surrounding rocks he may have taken

shelter from the fury of the winter's storm. Novalis says, 'a certain degree of solitude seems necessary to the full growth and spread of the highest mind, and extensive intercourse with men stifles many a holy germ.' But a glance around made it evident that St. Bruno was of opinion that any intercourse whatever was fatal to eternal salvation; led here by the voices of protecting angels, he felt himself nearer to God in his rocky cell. The fountain where he drank is but a few yards from the chapel. To flowing springs there is no such thing as time. Centuries have passed, drying up the life-blood of millions of human beings in their flight; but here without a pause, in the full measure of its birth-hour, gushes forth, clear and sparkling, this delicious spring, constant to man's wants.

A stone cross, o'ergrown with many-hued lichens, stands before the fountain. On certain days, the monks proceed in a body to St. Bruno's Chapel, and say masses therein for the repose of his soul.

I returned to the convent by a different path from that by which I reached the chapel. Both abound in scenes of exquisite sylvan loveliness. I could have dallied there the whole day, lost in happy day-dreams, for it was bliss to feel the pure free air from heaven, and to gaze at the blue sky through the broken roofs of pine.

While waiting for breakfast, I copied the following rules, which are suspended in each *salon* for the governance of visitors:—

## RÈGLES.

‘1. On ne peut parler aux religieux sans une permission du révérend Père ; laquelle ne s’accorde qu’aux proches parens, ou aux personnes qui auraient à traiter avec eux de quelque affaire.

‘2. On ne doit pas non plus parler aux frères, ni entrer dans les endroits où ils travaillent également, sans une permission *particulière*.

‘3. On est prié de ne pas trop élever la voix surtout près de la porte de l’église, et dans le grand cloître, où l’on ne peut entrer depuis l’Angélus du soir jusqu’à après celui du matin, ni sans être accompagné.

‘4. On ne pourrait séjourner dans la maison au-delà de deux jours, sans avoir obtenu l’agrément des supérieurs.’

I venture to think that few persons would feel disposed to put the hospitality of the convent to a longer test than the above period. So profound a melancholy reigns within its walls, that the spirits become affected, and one sighs for the companionship of rational human beings again.

Our breakfast was a chilly, unsatisfactory repast, the ghost of the dinner of yesterday, consisting of eggs, herbs, bread, and wine. By dint of considerable exertion, I obtained a bowl of milk ; others of our party preferred a request for an additional supply, but the dairy could yield no more, the cows belonging to the convent, though numbering more than half-a-

hundred, were at their mountain pastures. Sour wine, hard bread, and eggs, were thought sufficiently good for visitors. It is odd that better fare is not provided for worldly sinners, who, not pinning their faith on abstinence from the good things vouchsafed by God to man, would infringe no religious vow by partaking of more comfortable nutriment than the Grande Chartreuse affords; and this is the more surprising, as the stranger pilgrim is not left, as at the Great St. Bernard, free to recompense or not the monks for their hospitality. The Grande Chartreuse—it pains me to write the unromantic word—is but a dreary *tavern* on a very large scale; as proof whereof, here is a true copy of our bill, which the handsome monk placed in my hands, bowing, as he did so, nearly to the ground:—

2 Mss. S. de FRANCE, le compte se monte à 8 f.
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The excessive simplicity of the above is amusing. No unnecessary words, no extras; and though our fare was humble, the amount, which includes, we beg our readers to remember, payment for sundry glasses of ‘Chartreuse,’ for two dinners, two beds, and two breakfasts, proves that the monks are not extortionate landlords. I have printed the account, hoping that some of our fashionable hotel-keepers may take a lesson from it, and cut down the extortions of their bills in future.

We now hired mules, our intention being, as I have

stated, to return to Grenoble by Sapey. The handsome monk bade us a very affectionate farewell ; he seized my hands more than once, and hoped that we might meet again. Twelve o'clock struck as we filed out of the convent ; the church bell, seldom silent during the twenty-four hours, tolled for prayers. The monks went to their devotions, we to mingle in

The crowd, the hum, the shock of men.

Truly, said I to myself, as I passed out of the gates, if ‘*la vie du monde cache les épines sous les fleurs, la vie religieuse cache les fleurs sous les épines.*’ We regretted that we had not returned to Grenoble by St. Laurent. The Sapey route is not comparable in grandeur for a moment with that leading through the magnificent gorge between the former village and the convent.

There are, however, some fine mountain scenes, and the view of Grenoble coming down the steep on the opposite side of the Isère is particularly grand. The path throughout is wretched, often precipitous, and in many places dangerous for riding. While walking I had one fall, which caused me to remember it for several days. A warm bath, and the good cheer of the Hôtel des Trois Dauphins, were great healers of our aching limbs and collapsed stomachs.

The journey by this route occupied six hours, exclusive of an hour's halt at Sapey.

## CHAPTER XIII.

WE had taken places in a small two-horse diligence to Bourg d'Oysans, on the road to Briançon, which was to start in the afternoon at three o'clock. This gave us the greater part of the day at Grenoble. I availed myself of the time and opportunity to purchase some articles necessary for pedestrian travelling, which we had in prospect. It is worth relating, that my hat, which I had brought with me from London, and which was one of that species known, I believe, by the not very classical name of 'wide-awake,' having a low semicircular crown and a broad brim, not only attracted marked attention from the inhabitants of the towns in the south of France, but occasionally drew upon its wearer some rather unpleasant remarks. On inquiry, I found out that the cut was objected to as being associated with certain aristocratic notions, which were not made very clear to me.

One thing was quite certain, my hat was not the fashion, whatever it might have been, for I suspect the French may yet have applied to them the lines in Heywood's song, which run :—

The Spaniard's constant to his block,  
 The French inconstant ever;  
 But of all felts that may be felt,  
 Give me your English beaver.

I bought myself a Grenoble hat ; not entirely to avoid being stared at, though this, doubtless, had some influence in the matter,—but partly because my English hat was black, and therefore very unfit for repelling the sun's intense rays from my head ; and partly because it was nearly worn out.

My new purchase was a magnificent affair :—the brim was half as wide again as my former one, and flapped in a breeze like elephants' ears continued round my head, and the crown was higher and more imposing. When I first donned it and looked in the mirror, I scarcely knew myself. In an English town I should have been hooted, at Grenoble I was *à la mode*. No man took any notice of me. Why should they ? for I but reflected their own head-dress. But it proved an excellent hat, very comfortable, and very serviceable,—and seeing that it is yet in admirable preservation, I purpose to set the fashion with it among Waltonians.

It may assist in bringing about periodical changes in the fashion of our hats. And by hats I mean, not only those worn during our pleasure days, but the villanous section of a chimney-pot which we carry about with us during every-day life. The time was when men were as whimsical in the complexion and mould of their hats, as women are now with respect to bonnets.

Stubbs, in his *Anatomie of Abuses*, published in 1585, says, alluding to the hats of Englishmen, ' Sometimes they use them sharpe on the crowne,



pearking up like the spere or shaft of a steeple, standing a quarter of a yarde above the crowne of their heades, some more, some lesse, as please the phantasies of their inconstant mindes. Othersome be flat and broade on the crowne, like the battlementes of a house. And other sortes have rounde crownes, sometimes white, now black, now russet, now redde, now grene, now yellowe, now this, now that—never content with one colour or fashion two daies to an ende.’

Before I dismiss this head subject, I may mention that in the work just quoted occurs the earliest mention of beaver hats. After enumerating the various materials of which hats are made, the author says,—‘but what is more curious is, that some are made of a certaine kinde of fine laine. These they call bever hattes, of xxx or xl shillings price, fetched from beyonde the seas, from whence a greate sorte of other vanities doe come beside.’

The beavers are, I have no doubt, well pleased that the fashion for hats made of their fur is over. They cannot complain, for they have had their day.

From head to foot is a natural transition. And so it was at Grenoble, for after buying a hat I went in quest of a pair of walking boots. There are chamois in the mountains round Grenoble, and deer in the woods, and the town is famous for its leather, so I expected to be well shod,—and I was not disappointed. I am, indeed, led to introduce my boots, as well as hat, to the reader—the gentleman reader, I should

say—because I have not seen their like in London, and because, in all my Alpine excursions, I have never been blessed with such comfortable and excellent chausses as those which I purchased at Grenoble.

They were—are, I should say, for they live yet, (and are as hearty and sole-stout as ever, waiting to carry me, God willing, over many more mountains,) half-boots, made of stag-hide; the leather exceedingly thick, and yet as pliant as kid; and the soles project about the fifth of an inch beyond the upper leather. In this consists one of their chief excellencies, worthy of being imitated by all those who desire to be comfortably shod for mountain walking; for it is manifest that, by this arrangement, the side of the foot is protected from rocks and stones. I will not say that it improves the look of the boot, seeing that it gives it rather a duck-footed appearance; but I take it that none but a conceited dandy would care about this in the Alps, and there such a being has no business. These boots are made expressly for chasseurs. The workmanship is first-rate,—the price, fourteen francs a pair. The soles are very properly left unstudded by nails. Nothing can be conceived more dangerous, when a vast extent of rocky ground is to be traversed, than nails in the soles of shoes or boots. The heads, however uneven they may be at starting, soon wear down to a smooth, polished surface, and then the wearer will find himself slipping about in a manner not very conducive

to his pleasure or safety. A few strong nails may be put round the heels ; these will be useful and can do no mischief.

Grenoble yet retains its eminence for the manufacture of gloves. Indeed, almost all the kid gloves in London and Paris come from that town. It is sad to think of the many thousands of little skipping kids that are annually snatched from their mothers' sides, in the country round Grenoble, to have their skins turned into gloves. I was informed at the principal glove establishment in the town, that eight hundred workmen are occupied in dressing the skins, cutting out, &c. They prepare annually about three hundred thousand dozen pairs of gloves, which are sewn by six thousand women, in the town and surrounding country. Many hundred thousand skins are sent yearly to London and Paris to be made into gloves. Formerly, some half-century ago, every vessel from Bordeaux to Dublin—and there were many at that time trading between those ports—brought numerous bales of dressed kid-skins from the south of France, which were manufactured into gloves at Dublin, and were far superior to those commonly obtainable in England. But this, like many manufactures for which Dublin was formerly celebrated, is at an end, —so true is it, that when a place once loses a trade, by the dispersion of capital or other cause, it is most difficult to restore it.

It might be expected that gloves would be somewhat cheaper in Grenoble than Paris. This is not

the case. At least, I found at two or three shops where I made purchases, that the price for the best ladies' gloves was the same as in Paris. Women are paid four francs for every dozen pair of gloves that they sew. The annual value of the skins prepared at Grenoble amounts to about four million francs.\*

Having put our knapsacks in complete marching order, we returned to our inn, gave our portmanteaus the final strapping, paid our bill, (which was very moderate,) took from the pretty hand of the landlord's daughter a glass of Chartreuse, (tendered as a *cadeau*,) drank it to an 'au revoir' and 'bon voyage' on either side, and went in quest of our diligence. From the time that I had taken places in this machine—which I may here state travels, during the summer months, on alternate days, between Grenoble and Bourg d'Oysans—I had doubts as to the fidelity of its promised movements. And these were in a great degree confirmed when, on going to the bureau, where we were told the diligence would start from, no ghost even of such a thing appeared. On inquiry, we were informed that it was in a street not far distant, from whence it would start. Off we set after it, under the guidance of a porter, who carried our luggage, and after threading several long and narrow streets, we found our vehicle.

It was so wretched an affair, as to make me be-

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\* It appears that an enterprising leather-dresser at Grenoble has purchased a quantity of Paris rat-skins, with the intention of making them into gloves.

lieve that the bureau people were ashamed to allow it to stand in the Grande Place opposite to their office. Our fellow-passenger was a young priest (how these gentlemen swarm in the South of France!) who shared the coupé with us. He talked incessantly, very fast, and on all subjects; but that which pleased him most was Puseyism. With the movement of this church-disturbing cause in England he was well informed—far better, indeed, than myself; he had read all Mr. Newman's works, and regarded that gentleman as the most remarkable and able man that England had ever produced.

The road is a perfect example of a straight line, as it takes the shortest possible path between the two points—Grenoble and Claix, five miles distant. Of course it is bordered by trees, and equally of course was it very dusty, being glorious summer time; however, we did not rob Mr. M'Adam of any of his powder, for it was a serene and lovely afternoon, and dust and leaves were tranquil.

At Vizille, about ten miles from Grenoble, we paused sufficient time to see the castle, which is interesting as the cradle of the great French Revolution. Dauphiné had long manifested extreme impatience under the oppression of the aristocracy. Louis XVI. ordered the Estates to assemble, that they might appease and, if possible, put an end to the popular disaffection. But so far from doing this, they boldly sided with the people, and drew up a memorial, in which they remonstrated in the most

energetic manner against the tyranny exercised by the nobles, and declared that nothing would satisfy them but the immediate abolition of the many privileges of non-taxation enjoyed by the aristocracy, and the establishment of popular representation. This may be said to have lighted the revolutionary fire, which ravaged as well as purified France.

The castle possesses another element of interest to the protestant. Within its great hall, now, alas! turned into a calico printing-room, preached Felix Neff, that faithful and true follower of Christ. At the period of his ministry here (1822), there were about 8000 protestants in the department of the Isère, scattered over a surface of eighty square miles. These protestants had only three regular pastors. Vizille was one of their chief places of resort. Its situation, on the banks of the Romanche, one of the wildest torrents in France, with lofty mountains encircling it, had great attractions for Neff. And there must have been a peculiar solemnity in witnessing the gathering of the small flock in that gothic hall, which had echoed in ancient days the inspiring songs of the Huguenot cause.\*

On leaving Vizille we entered the defile called the Combe de Gavet, and were soon surrounded by mighty precipices and wild dashing cataracts. With

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\* The Castle of Vizille was built by Lesdiguières, the celebrated constable of France and governor of Dauphiné under Henri IV. He was the champion of the Huguenot cause in his youth, but apostatized from it in old age.

every step the majesty of nature asserted its pre-eminence. The road was as a thin thread serpentine among enormous rocks which encumbered the valley. They might have been scooped out into capacious dwellings. Teams of elephants could not move the smallest. Yet they were swept hither by the force of water which played with them as if they had been but corks. The celebrated inundation at Martigny sinks into insignificance compared to that of the Combe de Gavet. A huge landslip at the upper end of the gorge, so effectually dammed up the river Romanche that it grew into an enormous lake, whose depth and area increased continually during two centuries. At the end of this long period, the barrier at the head of the gorge was snapped, and the waters of the mighty lake swept through the breach with fearful force and speed.

Many villages were destroyed. The City of Grenoble even was injured, though eighteen miles from the lake.

I was extremely anxious to examine in detail the scene of this dreadful catastrophe, but unfortunately daylight failed as we came to the entrance of the valley of Bourg d'Oysans. French diligence proprietors can have but little feeling for the beautiful or the picturesque in nature. But it is hard that they assume equal barrenness of feeling on the part of their customers. Why the diligence in which we travelled to Bourg d'Oysans should start at so late an hour in the afternoon as to bring the traveller amidst the

finest scenery on the road as night sets in, is to me incomprehensible; such, however, is the fact. As we approached the Bourg we had shadowy visions of colossal buttresses propping up cloud-dwelling cliffs and scars, but it would have required owls' eyes to have seen the details of the rock-scape.

Our vehicle disgorged us in the black, dirty heart of the black, dirty village, opposite the 'Dragon,' which turned out a devouring monster to us. The landlady held supreme sway over the diligence trading between Bourg d'Oysans and Briançon. When she ascertained that we purposed sleeping in her house, she accorded us places in the carriage.

Our bed-rooms were rather dreary affairs, slightly larger editions of the Chartreuse cells, but sadly destitute of the cleanliness which characterizes the latter. Our supper was made dainty by the addition of a fine ptarmigan, which our hostess called a pheasant, and for which she charged eight francs, in order, doubtless, that we might hold it in lasting remembrance.

The other bill items were in harmonious keeping with this charge, as is attested by the fact that the total amount was twenty-three francs,—which for two suppers, two beds, and two milky breakfasts, must have yielded the 'Dragoness' pretty good profit. When I remonstrated over the exorbitant charge, she replied that travellers and provisions were alike scanty. I might have responded that travellers' purses are sometimes scanty too; however, I paid the bill, and I now pay her off by cautioning the



reader, should he turn his steps to Bourg d'Oysans, to avoid the 'Dragon' as he would its creator, whose name I leave to the reader's imagination.

At half-past five the following morning we were *en route*, or at least, *en coupé*, but the machine could not move until some repairs had been effected by the village smith, who hammered and battered away at the vehicle, for the purpose, as he alleged, of strengthening it, at the imminent risk of knocking it clean over. In England, passengers would have taken the liberty to remonstrate at such proceedings being carried on while they were in the carriage; but here the passengers bore themselves patiently and meekly, as French travellers always do—enduring all things, and perhaps, hoping all things. At length the smith pronounced the diligence road-worthy. Our driver, who had taken advantage of the delay to sleep out his broken slumbers, was roused, and we departed. The newly-risen sun was fighting gallantly with the mists, which on the mountain crests were losing their substantiality, but they still overspread the plains and valleys like a huge opaque curtain which had not been raised. Our fellow passengers were more numerous than the narrow dimensions of the vehicle rendered desirable. The *coupé*—in which we were stowed—was narrow and leg-torturing; had we possessed it unshared we should not have complained, but there was a third party, who being not of the leanest kind, acted as a most unpleasant wedge during the journey.

The body of the carriage was occupied by a lady and three gentlemen, all bound with us for Briançon.

About an hour after leaving Bourg, we came to the mouth of the dark gorge of Les Infernets, and commenced its long and arduous ascent. Of course we walked, and were well pleased to have the opportunity of doing so. The scenery of this gorge is of the most sublime and awful nature. Its name is full of dark import. At the bottom, several hundred feet below the traveller, the Romanche writhes convulsively, foaming and roaring as it ploughs its way onwards. Precipices of vast height tower over the road, and this, not the least wonder of the defile, is carried by a succession of terraces and tunnels, cut in the solid rock along the breast of the gorge. Some of these galleries are of great length: one is 269 yards long, and is lighted by three large lateral openings, which afford glimpses of dreadful depths far, far below.

The evidences of a master-mind are apparent in the construction of this road. Indeed, only a daring man would have suggested it. That man was Napoleon. At an early period of his power, he saw the desirableness of effecting a communication between Grenoble and Briançon, which would enable the heaviest four-wheeled vehicles to pass. A path practicable for hardy mules existed, identical for a considerable portion of the way with the ancient Roman road, traces of which yet remain. But this was a passage of great difficulty and even danger, as

it was carried over the mountains at an elevation of 1000 feet higher than any part of the new road. The latter was commenced in 1804. Had it been required for military purposes, it would doubtless have been speedily completed; but as this was not the case, the works proceeded very slowly, and ceased before half the road had been constructed, nor, as will be seen presently, is it yet finished.

On emerging from the gorge, we entered a valley strewn with huge boulders which had fallen from the precipices on either side. Not a human habitation was visible; the scene was wild and dreary in the extreme. At a turning of the road, a broad and deep cataract flashed into daylight from the dark recesses of the rocks, and came tumbling down to the skirts of the road. This waterfall bears the name of *Le Saut de la Pucelle*, in connexion with the common legend of some romantic girl who 'loved not wisely, but too well,' and preferred death to dishonour—an alternative she met by casting herself into the dashing waters of the cataract.

We now came to the miserable hamlet of Le Dauphin, which marks the entrance to the Hautes Alpes, and, still ascending, entered the stupendous gorge, called the Combe de Malval,\* which abounds with all the attributes of mountain grandeur. Vertical precipices rise from it crusted with glaciers, giving

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\* It is worthy of remark, that the word *combe* is equally applied in England and the Alps to a cul-de-sac valley.

birth to torrents which stream down like lines of burnished silver.

On attaining the extremity of the Combe, our diligence stopped, and we were requested by the driver to descend. We supposed that we were about to climb another steep, and inquired whether the ascent was long; but the reason for our being asked to dismount was far different to what we imagined. The road had come to a termination, and as the diligence was unprovided with wings, it was evident that it could travel no farther. This fact accounted for certain evasive answers which I received at Grenoble respecting the road, the existence of which as a continuous line between that city and Briançon I very much doubted. The clerk, however, assured me that the carriage travelled between the two places, but the fellow lied in his throat, and I much regret that I had not an opportunity of proving to him that I was now aware of this fact.

It was amazing to witness the placidity of our fellow passengers at this imposition. It scarcely ruffled their tempers. The husband of the lady alone evinced anger. However, they undoubtedly acted the part of true philosophers, for a whirlwind of passion could not have impelled the diligence an inch farther. A sledge drawn by mules was waiting to transport the luggage to La Grave, at which place, which we were told was *une petite demi-heure* distant, we should find another vehicle to take us on.

It turned out to be a good hour and a half's walk.

Our way led us principally over the road in process of formation, which was encumbered by rocks, and painfully rugged. Had the weather been unfavourable, we should have been wretchedly situated; happily, however, it was highly propitious for mountain travelling, and when the burst of indignation at the trick practised on us had subsided, we laughed at our adventure, and trudged onwards after the sledge.

But our walk did not endure long, for in the course of a few minutes we halted to contemplate a scene of such extraordinary magnificence, that it is almost hopeless to convey any adequate idea of it to the reader.

It had for its main features the mighty Mont Lens, crested with everlasting ice and snow, and coated with enormous glaciers, which descended in broad folding waves deep into the valley. The ice spires were of enormous magnitude, and shone like silver crystals beneath the sun's rays. Other glaciers were around, but none could compare in grandeur with those of Mont Lens. Several hundred labourers were at work on the road. It was interesting to see it in progress along the sides of fearful precipices. Little do we think, when travelling on the smooth highways which penetrate and intersect the Alps, of the perils which have attended their construction. Swung by a single rope at a dizzy height above the base of a precipice, many men were suspended engaged in blasting a passage in the face of the rock.

I was informed that when first they commence their hazardous labours they are exceedingly cautious, and seek shelter in some distant place, where no rocky fragments can reach them. But they soon acquire a foolhardy courage, and are frequently satisfied by simply repelling themselves from the face of the precipice while the blast is taking effect. It sometimes happens, however, that they suffer for their rash temerity. Not long ago, on the occasion of a heavy blast having been ignited, three men, who were suspended to a rope, swung themselves off from the precipice the moment before the explosion; a sharp fragment of rock, detached by the blast, severed the rope, and they were precipitated to the jagged depths beneath. Had it not been for the late revolution, which has had a very injurious effect on the financial prosperity of the country, the road would have been completed in the early part of 1850; now the supplies come in so slowly, that there is but little chance of its being finished under five years. It has yet to be carried over the most formidable part of the Col de Lautaret.

We arrived at La Grave at one o'clock. It is a wretched place; fitter for the habitation of arctic bears than human beings. Indeed, surrounded as it is by barren rocks, ice and snow, it puzzles one to imagine how life can be sustained. The cold is so excessive, that in case of a death during winter among the inhabitants, the body cannot be buried, on account of the frozen state of the ground, until spring. The

fuel consists of the manure of cattle, compressed into cakes, for there is no wood in the vicinity.

Bearing all these things in mind, we were not prepared for the fare which awaited us at the cabaret in the village. This consisted of bouilli, and an unlimited supply of eggs, which, with tolerable bread, and a good bottle of wine, enabled us to dine to our satisfaction. There were two good beds in the tavern, so that a storm-overtaken traveller might rest there for a night.

La Grave was one of Neff's protestant folds. In mid-winter, as well as during summer-time, he visited it, undergoing fearful dangers in crossing the mountains, and passing through the defiles in his journeys to and fro. It has been well remarked, that 'the Piedmontese valleys form a garden, with deserts, as it were, in view; some of them, indeed, are barren and repulsive, but there are exceptions. On the contrary, in the Alpine retreats of the French protestants, fertility is the exception, and barrenness the common aspect. There the tottering cliffs, the sombre and frowning rocks, which from their fatiguing continuity, look like a mournful veil which is never to be raised, and the tremendous abysses, and the comfortless cottages, and the ever-present dangers from avalanches, and thick mists and clouds, proclaim that this is a land which man never would have chosen, even for his hiding-place, but from the direst necessity.'

But, as Neff observed, the natives owe their religious, and perhaps their physical existence, to

their situation ; for if their country had been more secure, and more accessible, they might have been exterminated, as happened to the majority of their protestant brethren in the Val Louise. A papal bull is preserved, promising the apostolic benediction to all who should distinguish themselves in the work of extermination. It consecrated the war that was to be waged against them under the high and holy name of a crusade, and invited all the faithful ‘to tread them under foot as venomous adders, and to destroy them.’

Who does not remember Milton’s noble sonnet, commemorative of the persecution of the protestants in Piedmont :

Avenge, O Lord ! thy slaughter’d saints, whose bones  
Lie scatter’d on the Alpine mountains cold ;  
Ev’n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,  
When all our fathers worshipp’d stocks and stones.

But with all the pains that were taken to annihilate the protestants, several escaped to the remote parts of Dauphiné. These were the sole remnants of the primitive Christians of Gaul, and ancestors of Neff’s flocks, among whom he laboured during several years, until sickness, produced by unwholesome food and over-exertion, put an end to his toils, and was soon followed by his death, which took place in April, 1829.

It is impossible to read the life of this truly excellent man (the Triptolemus, as he has been called, of the High Alps,) and to travel amidst the scenes of his labours, without feeling that he was, indeed, a true



and zealous follower, in great humility, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our conducteur was an ease-loving man, and was in no hurry to forsake his wine-skin for the road. Two hours we tarried at La Grave, and then we walked out of it. For, although a diligence was prepared to take us to Briançon, we were honestly advised that the road ascending the Col de Lautaret was so bad and steep, that the two horses could not drag us up; indeed, the luggage was placed on a car drawn by mules. So we went on our way. But although it was long and toilsome, we did not regret having to walk to the summit of the Col de Lautaret—that beautiful Col, of which Ladoucette says that it is ‘la plus belle des Hautes Alpes.’ To the botanist it is a rich mine. It is completely covered with wild flowers. Peasants were cutting these for their cattle. We met numbers of mules laden with large bundles of dried flowers, skeletons of bouquets, withered, but aromatic. Before attaining the summit of the Col we had a magnificent view of Mont Pelvoux, which is the Mont Blanc of this district of the Alps. Its height is 13,123 feet, but little inferior to that of its gigantic compeer. The culminating point of Mont Pelvoux is the Pointe des Arcines, which is shrouded in glaciers.

It occupied us three hours to attain the summit of the Col de Lautaret, which is very nearly 7000 feet above the sea. A small hospice exists at the top. It was founded by Humbert II., Count of Dauphiné. At the time of our visit it was in a state of great

dilapidation. I was the first of our party to arrive on the summit. While waiting for the diligence, I sat down on a delicious swardy bank, and bathed my feet in a runnel of crystalline water, an operation which drew upon me the severe criticisms of our travelling friends, who considered it highly dangerous.

At length our vehicle came up. The luggage was stowed on the roof, we inside, and off we set down the mountain. To Monestier, fourteen miles from Briançon, the route continued very bad; there we came to the new road, on which we travelled, passing through several populous villages, to our destination. We arrived at Briançon at half-past eight o'clock, having been fifteen hours and a half accomplishing the distance of fifty-four miles from Bourg d'Oysans. It was too dark to see anything of the fortresses, but by the number of drawbridges that we crossed, we were made aware of our entrance into a fortified town. The diligence drove to the Hôtel de la Paix, where we procured two bedrooms, and an olla podrida kind of meal, which, if it was not very choice, possessed at least the merit of being abundant.

## CHAPTER XIV.

THE citizens of Briançon must have the enviable faculty possessed by the brazier who went to sleep in a caldron while smiths were riveting the plates close to his hard copper pillow. At the hour of three A.M., I was aroused by a battering of drums, which continued so long and so loud, that I was puzzled exceedingly in conjecturing whether the said drums were beaten by human hands or steam machinery; and I was further puzzled to divine the cause of the infernal tantararara. At first I imagined that an *émeute* had broken in upon the remote town, but as the drumming continued and roused no echoes but its own, I quickly dismissed that idea. Had it been light I should have got up, but as darkness was yet on our hemisphere, I remained in bed listening and wondering, for sleep I could not. When I did get up, I ascertained that the drum-whacking was to announce to the inhabitants of the surrounding country that the gates of Briançon were about to be opened, and that the same noisy notice is given every morning. I walked round the city before breakfast: this sounds a great undertaking, but it is an affair of some twenty minutes at most, for the place is small, and contains only 3000 inha-

bitants. It stands on a steep slope, so steep, indeed, that the street running up and down, which cuts the town in twain, is impassable for carriages. At the upper end it is backed by an isolated rock, and the lower commands the meeting of three valleys. A very high wall girdles it, squeezing the houses together. Many of the buildings are picturesque, and bear dates of the olden time carved on their curious faces.

After breakfast we set out to see the fortresses, but it was necessary to be provided with a pass. Remembering our Grenoble difficulty, we determined to see the commandant, in whom the power lies to grant orders. We were ushered into the presence of this great personage by his secretary. M. le Commandant was a fine specimen of a militaire of the Bonaparte age. His head and mustachios were silvered, and he wore in his button-hole the ribbon of the Legion of Honour.

I made our wishes known to him, adding, however, that we should be perfectly satisfied by being allowed to visit one or two of the forts. This I said, conceiving that leave to see them was conceded charily. But the commandant quickly undeceived me: ‘You shall have an order,’ he said, ‘to see them all; but I strongly recommend you not to go to that on Mont Infernet, it cost me two days to climb to it and return.’ And he added—‘I allow every one to see the forts who wishes to do so, even Radetzky himself might go over them if he chose; for it is my firm belief

that the united armies of Europe could not take them.' While his secretary was preparing the pass, the commandant told us that there were four hundred cannon in the forts, and one thousand barrels of gunpowder,—each barrel containing fifty kilogrammes.

When the pass was duly sealed, it received the commandant's signature, and was put into our hands with a low bow on his part, and received by us with grateful acknowledgments.

The fortifications of Briançon are the chiefest military engineering wonders of France, and justly entitle that city to be called the Gibraltar of the country. Placed in a defile communicating with the passage from Italy into France, it was deemed desirable to fortify the eminences commanding it. This has been done by erecting powerful defences on them. There are seven distinct forts; the lowest is 200 feet above the city; the highest, on Mont Infernet, 9350 feet above the sea-level.

The deep defile through which the river Clairée rushes is spanned by a bridge of a single arch, of 138 feet from buttress to buttress, and 172 feet above the water. This bridge leads to the principal forts. An excellent zig-zag road is conducted up the rocky heights, from fort to fort; but independently of this, a communication exists between them by means of subterranean passages.

Our military ardour evaporated long before we had surmounted one thousand feet. We gazed at

Mont Infernet, with its high-seated fort, but had not the courage to ascend to it,—indeed, the task requires a long day. The devices to annihilate life are most ingenious; it would, however, need the education of a military engineer to appreciate them properly. Every point where footing can be found is commanded by cannon, and it seems next to impossible for an army to escape destruction if it attempted to enter Briançon by the Italian road.

The spectacle would indeed be fearfully grand to witness the forts opening their fire on an advancing enemy. In Homeric days, Jupiter himself would be considered throned on Mont Infernet launching his thunderbolts, when the balls came down from the tremendous heights. As at Grenoble, we were allowed free access to the various forts and fortifications, but were disappointed in not being allowed to sketch. With the fortifications we should not have interfered, and it was rather amusing to think that the authorities wielding such gigantic weapons as twenty-four-pounders should fear the power inclosed within the narrow tube of a pencil.

Looking at these fortresses and fortifications, which stretch away broad and high for miles, and remembering that, after all, they form only a small portion of the vast military works which France has judged proper of late years to construct,\* we cannot feel

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\* Although the fortifications of Briançon have been erected for many years, it is only lately that they have been raised to their present efficiency. This has cost three millions of francs.

surprised by seeing that the estimate of the expenses of the army for this year (1850) is 327,000,000 francs, or, in round numbers, £13,000,000.

After satisfying our curiosity by visiting the fortress of Les Trois Têtes, we went round the walls of the city, in search of a good locality to sketch the fortifications, which may be drawn from without, though not from within. Above the gates of the Porte d'Embrun, we were amused by seeing a display of the revolutionary spirit, whose waves had rolled from Paris even to this distant and unfrequented locality. In 1815, when Briançon was threatened by the allied forces, the garrison then defending it, though weak in numbers, gallantly refused to surrender the city, though ordered to do so by the préfet. In commemoration of this event, Louis Philippe caused the following inscription to be emblazoned in gold letters above the principal entrance to the city:—

AUX BRAVES BRIANÇONNOIS, POUR LA CONSERVATION DE  
CETTE VILLE, LOUIS PHILIPPE RECONNAISSANT.

When the news arrived that Paris had declared France to be a republic, and Louis Philippe a '*vieux coquin*,' the 'braves Briançonnois' rushed to the above inscription and consigned their late monarch's name to oblivion by the point of the bayonet. A scratched blank exists, which I dare say will ere long bear the name of an 'Empereur.'

The immediate environs of Briançon abound with picturesque scenes. At the risk of breaking our necks, we scrambled to the summit of a semi-detached

rock, which commands a grand view of the upper part of the gorge, bestrided by the bold bridge, backed by the Genève mountain, on the sides of which the road into Italy may be traced, like a narrow ribbon, winding upwards. This scene—as well as another, looking down the defile, and on the range of the snowy Alps—we transferred to our portfolios, and I strongly recommend them to the artist's notice.

The Val Louise, which stretches from the base of the town to the Alps, is a lovely pastoral garden. It is inhabited during the summer by many thousand sheep, who migrate from the Camargue, or delta of the Rhone, about May, and return in October and November. These animals travel in flocks of 8000 to 40,000, and are from twenty to forty days on the journey. One of the shepherds is chosen chief. Three shepherds and three dogs are appointed to every thousand sheep. Goats form part of the marching establishment of these fleecy troops, and supply the shepherds with milk.

The sheep cover the bases of many of the mountains in Provence and Dauphiné. It is the business of the chief to examine into the damage done by the flocks in their passage through the country, and remunerate the communes accordingly.

Within the walls of Briançon there is little to interest. Some of the houses, as I have stated, are picturesque, but there is not that air of antiquity about the place which one expects, considering its great age. It is mentioned by Strabo under the



name of Brigantium,—by Ptolemy, and Pliny,—the last of whom attributes its origin to the traditionary legend of some fugitive Greeks, who were chased from the borders of Lake Como.

Unfortunately, the town was destroyed by fire, during the attack of the Piedmontese, in 1692, when all its archives perished. Situated in the heart of a wild and inaccessible country, it is regarded as a metropolis of the Hautes Alpes, and sends annually a number of schoolmasters into the surrounding districts. These teach reading and writing, arithmetic, and sometimes Latin. The kitchens of the Roman-catholic priests generally serve as school-rooms.

I think that we should have made a longer sojourn at Briançon than two days, for there were many scenes of great beauty in the neighbourhood which we wished to sketch, but we were fairly put to flight by the villanous odours in our hotel. The filthy contrivance, or rather want of contrivance, which is the plague-spot in all French inns, and particularly in those removed from the great thoroughfares, was here surpassingly disgusting. With such exhalations in our nostrils, we ate our food with loathing, and sighed for the clean parlour of an English inn. Wonderful, most wonderful it is that the French, who take such delight in sweet perfumes, should be utterly indifferent to nasty smells; but this may be explained by the fact that they do not appreciate the meaning of the word nasty.

On remonstrating with the landlady on the dirty

state of her house, she opened her eyes wide with astonishment, and boldly asserted that her establishment was particularly remarkable for its cleanliness. This antipodal difference of opinion rendered it so extremely improbable that we should ever agree, that I judged it better to drop the subject, and get rid of the cause of complaint by removing from it as soon as possible.

## CHAPTER XV.

AS I entered the salon on the morning of our departure from Briançon, I was accosted by a police functionary, who demanded my passport; the first time that it had been asked for since we entered France—a remarkable fact when we remember the recent troubled state of the country, and more particularly of that part of it abutting on the Piedmont frontier.

Fortune favoured us in the weather, which continued lovely, and highly favourable for mountain travelling. We were fortunate, too, in procuring seats in the coupé of the diligence journeying to Susa. The carriage was a great improvement on that in which we had entered Briançon, being more commodious and comfortable. We had taken our places, and imagined that the third seat would be unoccupied, when a slim figure appeared at the door. It was that of a very youthful and pretty maiden. Her attire more befitted a ball than a journey. On her head was a tiny gauze cap, adorned by a single blush rose. Her dress was muslin, showing her neck and arms, and her feet were covered with thin shoes. As soon as the conducteur saw her, he opened the door of the coupé, and assisted her to ascend the

steps She took the seat between us. She was, then, to be our *compagnon de voyage*. I fear that my curiosity to know her history outran my discretion. Be that as it may, we had not proceeded far on our journey before I ascertained it. And as you, reader, man or woman, old or young, may have some curiosity on the subject, I shall briefly interrupt the thread of my narrative by satisfying it. The maiden, whose name—but what can it signify to *you* what her name is—was the daughter of a glove manufacturer in the fair city of Grenoble, and she was on her way to her uncle, who carried on a similar trade in Turin. She had left Grenoble three days before we met her, and had fallen in with sundry adventures which gave her anything but a favourable impression of the pleasures of travelling. The most serious of these was the loss of her luggage, which had by some unfortunate accident been put on a diligence at Gap, going to Marseilles, instead of that bound for Briançon. She was quite alone, and was almost overpowered by her forlorn position. But she had found kind persons who had befriended her, and she had been placed in the hands of our conducteur, with strict injunctions that he was to protect her. Her exceeding modesty and gentleness would have gained protection from the roughest of the rough sex.

Soon after leaving Briançon we struck the roots of the Mont Genève. The diligence stopped to let us out, and we commenced the ascent of the mountain. The road is carried up by a series of bold

zig-zags; these the pedestrian crosses, as his course lies upwards, by a path which scales the mountain in nearly a straight line. Grand were the views looking back on Briançon, with its bristling forts and snow-capped Alps in the distance; and lovely were the scenes through which our path led us. Beneath dark green pines, whose blanched trunks were festooned with amber-hued moss, natural flower-gardens of rare richness and beauty bloomed. The wild strawberry presented its scarlet berry and white blossoms; sapphire buds of the *Polygala Alpina* gemmed the ground; the exquisite blue of the gentiana peeped out here and there; and wood anemones cast their showers of starry blossoms over and through all this tangled mosaic of beauty.

Pausing to gaze on these scenes, I thought myself at first alone, for no sound fell on my ear. But such loveliness was not created for man only. Clouds of bright-hued insects flashed like painted meteors athwart the rich blossoms, or hung suspended, like bright stars, beneath the green domes of the pines. Stirring not, I heard through the air their thin whisper, voices of happy rejoicing in their ephemeral existence, but so softly faint and low, that they were wafted away by a breath.

As we ascended, the features of the scenery became harsher, but the comparatively low elevation of Mont Genève (6476 feet) renders it less sterile than most of the Alpine passes. Indeed, on the table land

forming the summit, we saw small patches of barley and rye, which, unless the season proved very unpropitious, we were told would come to maturity about the end of October.

We arrived at the little hamlet called Bourg Mont Genève long before the diligence. Its situation is not exactly that which one would choose for a residence. From the numerous Roman remains which have been found on its site, it is evident that that people had a military station there for many years. A short way from the village stands an obelisk which marks the boundary between France and Italy. To this we hastened, and fancied, as we stood in Piedmont, that looking upwards at the sky, the colour was richer, and the air balmier—for there is ever a charm on entering Italy.

The ubiquitous genius of ‘le grand Napoléon’ meets the traveller on the top of this mountain. The obelisk records that—

Napoléon le Grand,  
Empereur et Roi,  
Restaurateur de la France,  
A fait ouvrir cette route  
Au travers du Mont Genève,  
Pendant qu’il triomphait de ses Ennemis  
Sur la Vistule et sur l’Oder.\*

This inscription, as well as another on the opposite side, in laudatory Latin, was composed by the Institute of Paris. In 1815, an Austrian and Sardinian

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\* The road was constructed in 1807.

army, which entered France by the Genève Pass, destroyed the original black marble tablets bearing the inscriptions. They have been restored very recently by order of the last king of the French.

Not far from the obelisk, are the birth-places of two rivers whose future courses are emblematic of peace and fury. They are the Doira, which flows tranquilly through the plains of Piedmont, blends its waters with those of the Po, and finally falls into the Adriatic; and the Durance, which tears its way through Provence, causing desolation in its impetuous career. Some poetaster has recorded the different courses of these rivers in the following lines:—

Adieu, ma sœur la Durance,  
Nous nous séparons sur ce mont;  
Tu vas ravager la Provence,  
Moi féconder le Piedmont.

While waiting for the diligence, we visited the hospice. We were received by a priest who acts in the double capacity of curé to the village, and entertainer to travellers who may claim the hospitalities of the hospice. He led us into a salon, and desired a mountain Hebe, whom he called his 'fille,' to set refreshment before us. We declined everything excepting some water faintly flavoured with cognac, of which the priest seemed to possess a good store. In reply to my queries, he told me that very few tourists had crossed the Genève during the summer, and of these not one was an Englishman. Then he fell to the discussion of a subject very dear to French Roman

Catholic priests, the state of their brethren in Ireland, and was particularly solicitous to glean from me whether there was any chance of their being endowed by the English government.

Our conversation was suddenly interrupted by the arrival of the diligence. We bade the priest farewell, dropped our traveller's offering into the 'tronc,' which I am bound to say was so modestly situated behind a door that I was obliged to ask for it—mounted the coupé, and resumed our journey.

I was a little puzzled to know why the carriage had not stopped at the hospice, or the cabaret adjoining it, but the reason soon became apparent. A short way down the mountain we encountered the Sardinian Custom-house, surmounted by a royal crown, under which we came to a halt.

Our arrival woke up some half-dozen dark-haired Doganieri, who were stretched on benches in the sunshine, sleeping at the receipt of custom. Italy beamed in their faces, and their language was of that country. So were their actions slow and measured. My experience of custom-house officers convinces me that they are a touchy class of gentlemen, having very high notions of the inquisitive nature of their calling. Quick words on the part of the traveller will not hasten them, nor if they be in a searching humour will supplicatory language turn them aside from their poking and provoking purposes.

The luggage of the passengers on this occasion did not undergo very rough treatment. A case belonging



to a Savoyard came in for the largest amount of their attention. In vain the owner assured the officers that it only contained an organ which he had been grinding his bread out of; and equally in vain did he introduce the key and make the instrument confirm his assertion. The douaniers were suspicious; they insisted on having the instrument out and examining it; for they were apprehensive that it had a false bottom or side, such tricks being not unfrequently, as they alleged, played on them by perambulating Savoyards.

The douaniers were greatly at a loss to comprehend how it happened that our maiden companion had no luggage, and their wonderment was increased into grave suspicions when they discovered that she was unprovided with a passport; the poor girl having unfortunately enclosed this precious document in her absent trunks.

The conducteur, however, relieved her of the difficulty, by at once stepping forward and declaring that she was his wife. At this statement the girl blushed carnation, and testified by her looks that she was not very willing to even admit the relationship for a few minutes. The douaniers were evidently a little incredulous on the point; but as it was out of their power to test the truth of the conducteur's assertion, they allowed her to pass, and we resumed our journey.

At Oulx, which stands at the entrance to the valley of Bardonneche, we halted to dine. The inn was kept by an Italian, and our fare was much imbrued in

the oil of the country. I prevailed on our fair travelling companion to dine with us, carrying her off from her husband, to which, however, she did not appear to have any great objection. The drive from Oulx to Susa is full of beauties; soft Italian scenes—trellised vines with deep purple fruit, and spreading walnut-trees, lining the road for many miles. We descended continually, the valley contracting to a deep defile, in the middle of which the fort of Exilles is placed. This is one of the strongest positions in Piedmont, and has been the scene of many daring encounters. Looking at its dark and lofty loop-holed walls, which now enclose carbonari and malefactors, I thought of a tragie and deep-dyed story, communicated to me three years ago by Baron Plana, of Turin, when I had the pleasure of sharing that gentleman's hospitality in that city. A priest, in the exercise of that awful part of the Roman Catholic religion which requires its votaries to regard man as endowed with the power of absolution, had obtained entrance into the house of a lady residing in Turin. The lady was married. Her husband, unlike many Italian sposas, loved his wife with deep affection, and left no room for the attentions of a lover. But he had no control over the mysteries of the confessional; and although he wondered much that the priest should spend long mornings in his wife's apartment, he had not the power, without causing great offence, to order him to cease his visits. As time rolled on, the visits became of longer duration, and the unhappiness of

the husband was insupportable. In the height of his mental agony, regardless of consequences, he ordered the doors of his house to be closed against the priest. The latter, who, as the reader will have surmised, visited the lady for far different reasons than those appertaining to religion, threatened the husband with all the pains and penalties of the church, if he continued to refuse him access to his wife. But too many inculpatory circumstances came to light to permit him to do otherwise. Then the priest assumed his true character.

By some devilish artifice, he lured his wretched victim to a lone spot near Turin, and there murdered him. He had a light cart at hand, driven by a youth whose secrecy he thought he had purchased; in this cart he placed the dead body, and in the garb of a monk, for he had changed his priest's dress, he sat alongside the driver. They drove many miles into the country, and in the dead of night buried the corpse in the heart of a dense pine forest.

The following day the priest returned to Turin clad in his usual robes. His absence had excited no suspicion, for he was frequently in the habit of visiting convents and monasteries in the neighbourhood of Turin. Nor was the lady at first uneasy respecting her husband; for, although it is not to be supposed that her affection for him was of the strongest kind, yet she was not prepared to secure the love of the priest at the expense of her husband's death. And when days and weeks passed away without her receiving any

tidings of him, and the priest, now no longer meeting with any obstacle, had redoubled his attentions and protestations of love, dwelling strongly on the probability that her husband had deserted her, the better feelings of her nature manifested themselves, at first in reproaches, and afterwards in direct accusations against the man who, professing to act as guide to a better world, had made the present one a hell to her. The long-continued absence of the husband was now made an affair of investigation by the authorities. For a long time all their inquiries produced no other result than that of causing increased suspicions to attach to the priest. At length, however, a person came forward, and stated that he had seen the priest in a cart with a youth, driving rapidly towards the country from Turin, and that, to the best of his belief, he should know the cart and driver again. Accompanied by the police, he visited the owners of all carts which plied for hire in the town, and ere long identified the lad who had been engaged by the priest. The former, who had been terrified by the dreadful tragedy which he had witnessed, and whose conscience, on account of the part which he had taken in it, was full of remorse, at once confessed all that he knew. The priest was, of course, immediately arrested. For such a crime he should have been tried before the usual court appointed to judge civil crimes of magnitude committed by citizens generally, without respect of professions; but such was the power possessed by the church over the late King Carlo Alberto, that a peti-

tion addressed to him by a numerous body of ecclesiastics, praying that their 'unfortunate brother' might be tried by the 'Curie Vescovili,' a court whose jurisdiction merely extends to matters relating to marriage and the misconduct of clerical persons, met with a favourable reply, and the priest was merely sentenced to a temporary confinement.

Such, however, was the universal feeling of hatred against him, that on his liberation the government was obliged to send him for protection to the Fort of Exilles.

Nothing astonished me so much at Turin as the swarms of priests and monks—literally black and brown clouds of them hovering through the squares and streets. There are convents of Franciscans, Dominicans, Cistercians, Carmelites, Barnabites, Jesuits, &c. &c., all of whom basked in the sunshine of a bigoted court, for the late king was a slave to priestcraft, and there was scarcely a room in his palace that had not portraits of priests or monks suspended on the walls.

As we passed out of the defile of Exilles, the rich plains of Susa opened before us, and ere long the towers and spires of that town were in view.

## CHAPTER XVI.

SUSA! sweet and euphonious word! Italy is in its sound, and the skies of Italy are over it. Yes, and the houses are Italian, and the people Italian, and you are reminded of Italy in the mantling vines which cast their transparent green net-work over the jutting balconies and sculptured galleries. As we entered the town the vesper bells were tolling—

O sanctissima, O purissima  
Dulcis Virgo Maria,  
Mater amata, intemerata,  
Ora pro nobis.

In words like these is the spirit of prayer breathed at this hour throughout Italy. There is something pleasant in the idea, that the weary rest from their toil when the vesper bell is heard from the campanile, and that, for a few minutes at least, aspirations ascend heavenwards.

We engaged rooms at the Albergo della Posta, an inn pleasantly situated on the banks of the Dora-Susina, which passes through the town, blending the character of an Alpine stream with the more calm and tranquil flow befitting its future course through a rich Italian plain.

And the maiden from Grenoble—what of her? Well, I did not forget her. She had to remain at

Susa until eleven o'clock at night, at which hour a diligence was to start for Turin; so I requested our landlord to allow her to repose in a room, and to furnish her with anything that she might require, and at the above hour she proceeded on her journey. Poor girl! how much I should have liked to have placed her under her uncle's roof at Turin. The time was when I would have done this; but time robs us of much gallantry, and I argued that as Turin had been visited by me, I had no business there now.

Susa is generally dismissed in few words when spoken or written about; yet, though standing on the rind of Italy, it is, as I have said, as Italian as the core, and is remarkable for its interesting associations.

It is the Segusium of the Romans, and, as usual where that mighty people have been, presents memorials of them. The most remarkable and commanding of these is the arch, or city gate which was erected by Julius Cottius, the son of King Donnus, about the year eight before Christ, in honour of Augustus. The arch is a most beautiful object. It stands just without the governor's garden, and is canopied by rich walnut trees, the green leaves of which contrast happily with the deep brown of the long exposed marble.

We saw it as the sun was setting behind the towers and campaniles of the small town—the effect was enchanting. There was an air of peace and repose about the scene which gave it a peculiar charm.

Although the architecture of the arch, which is Corinthian, and the sculptures have suffered by time and the rough hand of the spoiler, yet the effect of the entire is so good, that a few years ago a scheme was proposed to transport the arch to Turin, that it might once more do duty as a city gate. Happily this has not been done, and it would be an act of deplorable barbarity to carry it into effect, for it is indebted to its present position for half the pleasant interest which it conveys to the spectator.

Two colossal and fine torsos which were disinterred near the gate, have met the fate, so far as removal is concerned, with which the arch was threatened. When the French became masters of Susa they sent the torsos to Paris, where they were fitted with hands, arms, and legs: one was called Tiberius, the other Napoleon; and thus restored and re-named, they were set up in the Louvre. After the peace, when the days of restoration arrived, the statues were despatched to Turin, and placed in the cortile of the university of that city, where I have seen them.

Few structures have impressed me more with the excellence of ancient stone-workers than the arch of Susa. Not that it can stand comparison with the arches at Rome—some of which, by the way, are made up of stolen ornaments—that of Constantine, in particular; but there is an entireness of purpose, combined with an excellence of performance about it, which is most remarkable, when we remember the



age in which it was built and the locality in which it stands.

Julius Cottius was a species of mountain-clan chieftain. He gave his name to the Cottian Alps, and swayed a large and rude mountain population; and when destiny compelled him to succumb to the authority of the Roman conqueror, he caused the arch to be coated with sculptures emblematic of the high ceremonies and pomp which accompanied the treaty with the Roman powers. These sculptures, as well as the arch, were, it is presumed, the work of native Celtic artists, and are most valuable as specimens of the art of that period.

Eighteen centuries and a half have passed since the stones of the arch of Susa were drawn out of the mountains, and carved and reared in their present forms. How much wisdom—world wisdom—has been gained since then; and yet how poor, how miserably poor, are we in our architectural talents! I question greatly if any town in England but London could produce so elegant an arch as that at Susa, and it is by no means certain that London itself would not spoil such a structure by incongruous ornaments, or a fearful and frightful confusion of orders.

The Cathedral of St. Justus is of great antiquity. Its appearance is in keeping with its age; and there are pillars in the nave of such stout dimensions, that they would bear up the whole edifice, including the campanile, without swerving.

As we were leaving the gloom-dyed building, we

encountered the Bishop of Susa, in his purple prelatical robes and massive gold cross, followed by a train of priests. The town, indeed, was full of priests and monks. They abound, said our landlord, and do no good.

Greatly as we were charmed with Susa, we did not allow inclination to rule duty, but went forth to ascertain the means and ways of leaving it. These were entirely unsatisfactory ; so much so, indeed, that we determined to give up diligence travelling, and to walk to Geneva over Mont Cenis and through the Alps of Savoy.

If the reader will be at the trouble of examining a map of Piedmont and Savoy, he will see that the high road from Susa, over the Mont Cenis, to Geneva, makes a considerable *détour* to avoid the Alps, while the mountain path is carried boldly over and among some of the highest mountains dividing Savoy from Piedmont. This route can of course only be taken on muleback or on foot. We were most anxious to travel it. But we were met with a difficulty at the outset of our scheme. The diligence people refused to take our portmanteaus. This threatened to destroy our pleasant plans, but after making several inquiries we found a muleteer, who engaged to convey them to Lanslebourg, at the foot of the Cenis, on the Savoy side, for the sum of ten francs.

I felt light and happy when the heavy baggage was off, and only wished that we could have transmitted it at once to Geneva. And now we were free

to depart when we fancied, which, be sure, was not at the dreadful diligence hour of three in the morning, or rather night. No; after a provident breakfast, and stuffing our pockets with a supply of the wand-like bread known by the name of 'Pane Grisino,' we left our *albergo* at the hour of seven in the morning, and took our way out of Susa by the Cenis road.

The morning was lovely: there had been a slight thunderstorm during the night, which had cooled the air, and rendered the temperature delightful for walking. Oh! the pleasure of being emancipated from those ambulating torture boxes, misnamed diligences: the exquisite feeling of liberty which is enjoyed in being able to linger in pleasant places, and saunter on with uncramped limbs, surrounded by the invigorating mountain breezes!

We had no guide; I will not say, however, that even in crossing the beaten track of the Mont Cenis one is wholly unnecessary, for we were indebted to the gratuitous guidance of a peasant for many short cuts, which led us through upland pastures, garlanded with vines of great beauty.

At a favourable position we paused to sketch the plains of Susa, which appear framed by giant mountains beyond a rich foreground of chestnuts, walnuts, and vines. By the way, writing the word vines reminds me how desirable it would be for the proprietors of vineyards to set up a strong box, well secured, to receive the compensation of those travellers who, under a burning sun, have not the power

to withstand the great temptation of plucking a bunch of the purple fruit, which frequently hangs within reach over the road.

For my own part, I frankly confess that oft and many times, when hot and thirsty, during a long day's walk up or down the mountain slopes of Northern Italy, with every respect for the eighth commandment, I have not had the fortitude to resist breaking it; which I certainly have done as often as I have picked even one berry from luscious bunches of grapes. Willing, anxious even, have I always been to pay liberally for my pilfering misdeeds, but there has been no means of doing so.

Half-way up the Cenis vines are trellised from tree to tree. Towards the base of the mountain the bunches of grapes were ripe, but as we ascended they were less and less mature, and ere we had climbed above them the berries were green. We were disappointed with the pass of the Mont Cenis. I have crossed almost all the other Swiss and Italian passes, and I was led to believe that of the Cenis devoid of all those magnificent attributes which render these mountain roads so glorious to travel. But it is not so. There are, certainly, no black gorges, or deep defiles, like those of the Hinter Rhein, or Munster Thal, where exquisite forest beauty 'sleeps in the lap of horror,' but there are huge mountains capped with snow, scars of picturesque shapes, and valleys of much pastoral loveliness.

The Monte di Roccia Melone, which impends

over Susa, and rises to the height of 11,430 feet, is a glorious object, and gladdens the eye of the traveller during his ascent of the Cenis. On the summit is a chapel, founded by a zealous crusader, who, having been taken prisoner by the Mahometans, registered a vow that, if liberated, he would erect a chapel in honour of the Virgin on this exalted pinnacle. The fetters which bound him are, or were, kept in the chapel; and it was the custom for catholics who had good heads and stout legs to make an annual pilgrimage to 'Notre Dame des Neiges' on the 25th of August, the feast of the Assumption. The path is so dangerous that numerous accidents have occurred. The curé of the Mont Cenis, writing to Saussure respecting it, says,—*'Ceux qui tombaient là étoient tellement brisés, que l'oreille étoit la plus grande pièce de leurs corps qui demeurat dans son entier;'* and although this is to be taken *'cum grano salis,'* there is no doubt that many lives were lost in attempting to make the perilous ascent. During the occupancy of the French, the pilgrimages were entirely discontinued, but they have been lately resumed.

When the vines failed us, we made frequent halts at the fountains, which gushed out of the live rock bounding the road-side. The water was clear, cool, and delicious, and we more than once proved, in our own cases, the fallacy of supposing that drinking cold water when the body is excessively heated is productive of injury. Indeed, it is self-evident, that when the body is exhausted by copious perspiration,

the readiest and most proper way of supplying the waste is to drink.

As we approached the summit of the pass, which, as the reader may remember, is an elongated plain, the road exhibited sad evidences of decay. The originally strong wooden palisades on the precipitous side have fallen down, and large and ugly gaps occur, of sufficient size to admit a phalanx of diligences to be engulfed. The white vapoury clouds were surging and rolling, as if rising from a huge caldron, about the precipitous sides of the mountain, and the cold was excessive. In fact, we were now immediately under considerable beds of snow, which had a sensible influence on the temperature.

We arrived at the village of Grande Croix at two o'clock. The inns were surrounded by carts and mules, the drivers halting here in their passage over the mountain. Our inn, unfortunately, was a couple of miles distant, at the other extremity of the plain; I say unfortunately, for we were exceedingly hungry. With the prospect of a good repast, we trudged across the plain, until we were stopped at the Dogana by an officer, who gratuitously gave us a handsome impression of the royal arms of Sardinia on our passports, and then allowed us to depart.

‘He who hath never regaled at a tavern knows not what a paradise it is,’ said Aretino; so thought we, as we sat down to our well-earned repast at ‘La Posta,’ which is, I believe, the best inn on the Cenis, and that where posting travellers generally stop.

The time was when the hospice on the Cenis was a formidable rival to the inns. The veteran traveller of Alpine passes, when kindly giving me some instructions and memoranda relative to the present tour, laid great stress on the hospice of the Cenis. 'Do not fail,' said he, 'to go there; for the monks will give you a capital dinner, and an excellent bottle of wine.' Alas! their power of doing so is over. During the late wars they were banished from their commodious convent, and have not since returned. The hospice is now tenanted by a lean curé, who, in his own person, holds out no inducement to the traveller to ask for a meal.

The lake, which is one of the remarkable features of the Mont Cenis, being cradled in a deep hollow in the plain, still belongs to the hospice. It is farmed to a fisherman, who pays 1400 francs annually for the privilege of fishing it. Formerly it abounded with large trout, but of late years the number has greatly decreased, and the present supply, during the summer months, averages only twelve pounds daily. The fish are delicious. It may have been that we were excessively hungry, but we both agreed that they were the best trout that we had ever eaten—firm, sweet, and salmony. They placed a brace before us, weighing about half-a-pound each.

Our dinner was a long spell of animal enjoyment; and bearing in mind that we were dining at an elevation of 6780 feet above the level of the sea, it surprised us not a little to find the fare so good.

After our repast, we lounged about, sketched the lake—around and above which wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist were playing—and paying our bill (which I see, by my notes, only amounted to five francs), strapped on our knapsacks, and resumed our journey. A short distance from La Posta, the culminating point of the Col is attained. Here it was that Napoleon, to whom the travelling world is indebted for this magnificent road, purposed to erect a mighty monument, to commemorate the conquest of Europe by the French under their great emperor. The liberal sum of twenty-five millions of francs was set apart for this project, and it would in all probability have been carried out, without waiting for the subjugation of every European state, had not insuperable difficulties presented themselves.

Bût in no part of Europe does Napoleon require a monument to perpetuate his fame less than in the Alps, for in the roads which cross their lofty crests, or pierce their rocky sides, we are continually reminded of him.

The houses of refuge, which are numbered consecutively, occur frequently after leaving the Col, affording sure evidence that avalanches are there of constant occurrence. At No. 20, the pedestrian traveller bids farewell to the high road, taking a path which zigzags down the mountain to Lanslebourg. This refuge-house is called 'La Ramasse,' and at it sledges are kept, in which adventurous peasants rush



down to Lanslebourg in ten minutes. The perpendicular descent is nearly two thousand feet.

The reader will remember that Mont Cenis is supposed by some persons to have been selected by Hannibal for the passage of his army into Italy. I think that it is only necessary to traverse this pass to come to the conclusion that Hannibal did not cross it;\* and I entirely agree with those who advocate the much more plausible speculation that he carried his Carthaginian army over the little St. Bernard.

When we had descended about a couple of hundred yards, we were rather puzzled to know which path to take of two which struck down the mountain, and led to two villages in the valley, about a couple of miles distant from each other. Our good fortune happily guided us, we struck to the left, and by a half skipping and half sliding kind of descent, we got down to Lanslebourg in two hours. We had ordered the muleteer to leave our portmanteaus at the Hôtel Royal, so we were of course obliged to go there, where we found them. Its character, according to the *Guide-book*, was twofold, for on one page it was mentioned as '*dirty and exorbitantly dear*;' and on another, allusion was thus made to it:—'If the

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\* I do not imagine that Hannibal could not have led his army over the Cenis. So great a general would scarcely have been foiled by difficulties which were not found insuperable to Charlemagne, who passed across the Cenis in the ninth century, with his army, to attack Derédorium, in Lombardy.

traveller be late, it will be better to proceed down the valley to Lanslebourg, and *enjoy the comfort of an excellent inn there*—the Hôtel Royal.

We stayed at it two nights, and I wish, before I conduct the reader into it, to be permitted to act as judge in the matter of this conflicting evidence. The decision of the court is, that the Hôtel Royal at Lanslebourg is an excellent inn, clean, and moderate in its charges.

On entering the hall we found it occupied by a bevy of damsels, who were laughing and smoking cigarettes. At our appearance they made a precipitate retreat, and it was with some difficulty that, in the absence of other human beings, we could coax them out of their hiding-place to show us bed-rooms.

The fact was, no guest honoured the house, and though early, the landlord and his wife were in bed. We followed a maiden upstairs along a spacious corridor, off which were several bed-rooms. As they were all vacant we selected two large apartments, and having changed our clothes, and enjoyed a most refreshing ablution, we descended to the salon, where we partook of tea, toast, and eggs—English fare amidst the Alps. The tea was extremely good, and gave no evidence of being, as a traveller once said, composed of ‘flowers from Mont Cenis.’

It was our intention to continue our Alpine march on the following morning, but the services of a good guide to conduct us over the formidable pass of

Mont Iseran being necessary, and as there was no chance of obtaining one without the landlord's assistance, we were under the necessity of postponing our departure for a day.

While drinking our tea, a gentleman came into the salon to supper. He was an *employé* at the Custom-house in Lanslebourg. Our meeting was fortunate, for when he ascertained that we were tourists, he strongly urged us to visit a most extraordinary object, which he described as a huge rocky needle, standing in the midst of a pine forest, about two hours' walk from Lanslebourg. He had lately seen it, and had been equally astonished and delighted with it.

Our *Guide-book* made no mention of this natural monument; but as we had a day on our hands, we resolved to go and see it, should the landlord's account confirm that given of it by our friend.

The following morning the Hôtel Royal assumed a very different appearance to that which it presented when we entered it on the preceding evening. The landlord and his wife had been up with the sun; and when I came down stairs, were bustling about with all the vehemence and importance befitting their calling.

Our proposed expedition across the mountains greatly depended on the possibility of forwarding our portmanteaus to Geneva, which we considerably doubted, remembering our difficulties respecting them at Susa. However, much to our satisfaction, the landlord engaged to send them on, which left us

free to walk. The next thing was to engage a guide. This we left to the host, and I am bound to say that he made an excellent choice.

Having made these arrangements, we started after breakfast to visit the wonderful rock, of which the landlord's account corroborated that given to us by our salon acquaintance.

We did not take a guide, being assured that the way was easy to find; the result was, that we lost our road and time; and we agreed that the same adventure would have happened to anybody else, for the path is anything but clear. We struck down the valley, passing through the attenuated village of Lanslebourg, at the upper extremity of which the Hôtel Royal is situated.

The road followed the course of the brawling torrent, which is fed by the glaciers and snows of Mont Iseran. After walking about an hour we came to Termignon, near which Laranza states the Roche Blanche of Hannibal is to be found. But there is nothing to be seen sufficiently marked to warrant this assertion. A few streaks of gypsum appear on the slope of the mountain considerably above the defile, but decidedly no white rock. Our directions were to pass through Termignon, and ascend the mountain by a mule path, which we should find a little way beyond the village to our right. The path was much farther than we had been led to expect. Ere we arrived at it, two hours had elapsed. We now scrambled up the

mountain, making for the hamlet of Solière, whose church spire we saw a long way off. The obelisk was near Solière, and anybody there, we were told, would direct us to it. But when we arrived at Solière, which is an embryo hamlet of some half-dozen houses, we could not find a human being. A withered bush dangling over a door betokened a cabaret, but hints of our presence, from a gentle tap to the fortissimo of a paving-stone, brought no one out. We walked on, hoping to find some person to guide us, and at last received the desired information from a girl who was washing at a brook near the hamlet. According to her, the Aiguille, as she called it, was situated in a forest, which extended before us, covering the mountain side. Following a track across a cornfield in which the village population were at work, we entered the pine forest, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the obelisk towering aloft over the tops of the pines.

Advancing, we presently came upon a cleared spot, nearly in the centre of which stood the rock.

It was indeed a remarkable scene. Surrounded by a dense pine forest, the huge spire sprung clean from the ground, presenting on all sides vertical faces quite impracticable of ascent. Its height, according to a recent measurement made by government engineers, is 360 English feet. The diameter of the base is about forty feet, tapering towards the summit, which is slightly pointed. The rock is composed of limestone. There are three or four small pinnacles

in the vicinity, but they shrink into insignificance by the side of the great obelisk.

Seeing a peasant on the edge of the forest, I accosted him, and asked whether the Aiguille had a name. He pronounced an appellation which I could not comprehend. ‘Can you write?’ I asked. ‘That I can,’ he replied; so he wrote in good and clear characters in my note-book—*Louillié*. From this man I learned that the forest in which we were is yet inhabited by wolves, descendants, doubtless, of the ravenous crew which gobbled up Walpole’s little dog as he was journeying with Gray along the high road in the valley to Italy.

We sat down to sketch the rocky monster. It was an overpowering subject. For, when near it, it seemed to tower up into the sky, and we could not, without entering the forest, get sufficiently distant from it for legitimate sketching purposes.

We were inclined to linger long contemplating the striking scene, but three very distinct and pressing reasons admonished us to retrace our steps. The first, that the afternoon was passing into evening; the second, that our stomachs were in a state of alarming collapse, we having neglected to take any provisions with us; and the third, that a thunder-storm was rolling among the mountain peaks, and threatened to overtake us.

Conceiving that the obelisk was only about two hours’ walk from Lanslebourg (whereas it was nearer

four) we had halted on our way to make some sketches, and had now a fair prospect of being bestormed and benighted. We ran down the mountain, looking backwards occasionally to watch the progress of the storm-clouds. The heavens presented a gorgeous appearance :

The clouds are broken in the sky,  
And through the mountain walls  
A rolling organ harmony  
Swells up, and shakes and falls.

So was it, peal after peal of thunder trembled amidst the mountain peaks, and the deep black curtain behind us was rent in twain by long lines of living light. Still, however, though on the verge of the storm, we managed to keep before it, and when we gained the valley we were under a serene sky.

The sun set in great glory behind the snow-crested mountains at the head of the valley. The glaciers seemed like golden rivers streaming down the mountains. It was a gorgeous spectacle, abounding in beauties indescribable and unpaintable.

If anything had been wanting to wipe off the reproach on the 'Hôtel Royal,' conveyed in one of its characters which I have given, the dinner which was set before us on our return would have been most efficacious. It was an excellent repast, comprising many delicacies (trout and partridges among others), elegantly served, and rendered additionally acceptable

by the accompaniment of a delicious bottle of *Vino d'Asti*, which reminded me of the Italian dithyrambic:—

The sparkling wine,  
Of the vine,  
Benign,  
That flames so red in *Sansavine*.

The dinner would have done honour to a Paris traiteur in the gay city—and was an astonishing performance for the cuisine of the mountain-buried village of Lanslebourg. But the hour of reckoning will come, said we, as we thought of the formidable words ‘exorbitantly dear.’ It did come, and the charge for the dinner was three francs a-head—no more.

We were surprised to find that no tourists had arrived. Not a single wandering Englishman even. The host said that he never remembered so few travellers as during the last two summers. There had not been above a dozen individuals in the entire season. The Sardinian wars were of course assigned as the reason of this falling off.

The Alps of Savoy are yet, compared to Switzerland, untravelled country. Adventurous English spirits, however, have endangered their precious limbs in Piedmont and Savoy, as may be gathered from the following exquisite couplet, which does double duty on the walls of the Post House on the Mont Cenis and those of the Hôtel Royal at Lanslebourg:—



Son of a happy land,  
Why didst thou cross the waves;  
Why on old Europe's worn out strand  
Wander 'midst wrecks and graves?  
No more through realms of night  
Thus idly curious roam;  
Go, bask in freedom's new-born light—  
Go, seek thy native home.

These lines have called forth the ire of some Italian, who thus resents the appellation 'realms of night' as applied to his country:—

'Quell' Inglese che chiamo l'Italia, regne della notte e una gran bestia, e quel che dice il contrario, e una bestione.'

It would almost appear, that in proportion to the magnificence of natural scenery, do tavern window and wall scratchers, and album scribblers, lose the paucity of brains they possess. A Frenchman, believing or hoping differently, presented a huge blank book to the chalet-keeper at the Montanvert, when the wonders of Chamouni and the Mer de Glace were beginning to attract numerous visitors.

A few years afterwards he went to the Montanvert, expecting to find his volume filled with the outpourings of inspired poetry. It was filled, but the matter was so bad that he entered the following record in the book:—

'J'ai pensé que les grandes impressions que l'on reçoit ici, donneraient de grandes pensées; que la pureté, la légèreté de l'air qu'on y respire les ferait

rendre avec netteté ; par suite j'ai donné en Juillet, 1809, ce registre pour que les voyageurs y consignassent leurs réflexions. Je m'en répons. Ce que j'y ai lu,—ce que je lis ici, me désespère. On a du bon sens quand on se détermine à voir la vallée de Chamonui, mais je vois qu'on le perd en y arrivant.'

It is vexatious to witness the *cacoethes scribendi* of our countrymen disfiguring many fair places at home and abroad, and casting ridicule upon us. I remember when at the Superga, near Turin, a few years ago, seeing a villanous couplet scribbled on a handsome marble tablet in that splendid building. The author of the monstrosity had, in the fulness of his pride, subscribed his name and address, by which it appeared that he was an Englishman, and dwelt in London. My travelling companion, at that period,—always on the watch for a joke, addressed a heavy double postage sheet to the gentleman, in which he assured him that his verses were in excellent preservation ; that their perusal had afforded him great satisfaction, and that he had given instructions to the cicerone of the Superga to request all future English visitors to transmit an account of the condition of the lines to their author.

## CHAPTER XVII.

WE were up with the sun. Not that we saw him rise, or that we

Made a breakfast of the morning dew,

but as he lifted his resplendent face from his soft pillow of fleecy clouds above the mountain tops, we were ready to start.

It was a glorious morning ; our usual good fortune respecting the weather had not deserted us at this our especial time of most requiring cloudless skies. .

Our guide, Jacques Trag, whom I beg to introduce and cordially recommend to the reader, should he ever be at Lanslebourg under similar circumstances to ourselves, was in waiting.

We charged him with the heaviest knapsack, under the flap of which we stowed a bottle of rare cognac which the landlord drew from the choicest bin in his cellar, and some bread. The other knapsack my friend and myself agreed to carry, turn about, relieving each other every hour.

At seven o'clock we started. Our course lay up the valley by a mule path, parallel to the Arc. As we had a long day's march before us, we walked slowly, on the good principle that—

Chi va piano, va sano,  
Chi va sano, va lontano.

As we advanced, the valley contracted to a ravine lined with large rocks, between which our path was carried. Patches of snow lay on the slopes of the mountains many thousand feet above, from whence thin, silvery ribbons of water fell, waving to and fro in their descent.

About an hour's walk from Lanslebourg, we came to the small village of Lans le Villard, standing in a narrow plain, every available inch of which is cultivated. It was harvest time, and the scanty population of the sterile valley were all a-field, loading their mules with bundles of thin oats and rye. It was difficult to conceive how the people derive a subsistence from the small patches of stony soil; yet, according to the guide, they thrive well, and there are no paupers among them.

Our path now ascended considerably; magnificently formed mountains rose at the head of the valley, their glaciers glistening beneath the sun. In three hours we reached Bessans, another rude hamlet, the inhabitants of which are proprietors of enormous herds of cattle. These pass the summer in a rich valley, at right angles to that of the Arc, up which we were journeying. The valley is of great extent, and is surrounded on all sides, excepting that of its entrance, by lofty and precipitous mountains. The entry lies through a narrow ravine, the sides of which are so contiguous, that the gap can be closed by a

gate. Through the ravine from two to three thousand cattle are driven in the spring, after the avalanches have ceased to fall. Each beast has a bell suspended to his neck, bearing the initials of the owner. When all the cattle have entered this huge natural fold, the ravine is closed, and they remain imprisoned during the summer months. As we passed the mouth of the valley, we heard the tinkling of the bells, the tones of which came musically and tremulously through the air.

We had now proceeded beyond the limits of cultivation. Large masses of rock nearly covered the valley; among them to our left, and close to the torrent, rose, to the height of fifty feet, a high block of white marble, which had been worked for building purposes. The expense of transporting the fragments to Lanslebourg was found, however, to be too great to be remunerative.

We strained our eyes to catch sight of Bonval, a hamlet where we purposed halting. A short distance beyond, the valley of the Arc is terminated by enormous ice-ribbed mountains. The outline of one, which our guide called Mont Ribon, formed a noble feature to the right. I may state here that the names given to the wild mountains of Savoy, are as numerous as they are unpronounceable. The peasants of every commune seem to have christened each peak with a name which jumps with their own fancy, wholly regardless of the titles lawfully belonging to them by right of government surveys. So that, when

naming any peak which struck us as fine or characteristic, I must beg the reader to understand that I am by no means certain that I have given the proper appellation.

As we approached Bonval, we gazed inquiringly at the steep slope of the mountain immediately over it, which rose to a prodigious elevation. This was the Iseran, up and over which we had to climb.

Crossing the Arc by a fragile plank, we entered the village, and followed our guide into a small cottage, from which, however, we made a precipitate retreat, as we were well nigh suffocated by the smoke from the fire of dried manure. The owner of the cabin enjoyed the monopoly of keeping the only house of entertainment in the village. But he had better things in store. Crossing the road, he led us to a newly-built house, containing a half-finished apartment, with rough walls and unplanned floor. It was provided with a table and benches, and at the upper end was a heap of hay and straw, on which the storm-stayed traveller might repose for a night.

Numerous pig-skins, distended and ruddy with wine, hung from the rafters; and black discs of great size, which looked like granite, but were rye-bread, were piled up in one corner.

Our arrival had created some excitement in the village. A girl, in descending Mont Iseran the previous evening, had been struck on the forehead by a sharp-pointed fragment of rock, which had penetrated the bone to a considerable depth; and in the

absence of professional assistance, the poor creature lay with the stone in her skull, suffering great agony. A messenger had been despatched to Lanslebourg for the surgeon of the commune; and as arrivals at the village are rare, it was supposed that the important man was among our party. He shortly came; but we were not very favourably impressed by his humanity in ordering refreshment, of which he partook, before visiting the girl. Such accidents, he alleged, were of common occurrence; but we had to learn that their frequency was attended with less pain to the victims than if they were rare.

Our host set before us some bread, cheese, and wine. The former was of stony hardness, and could only be cut with very great difficulty. A knife—called, in the language of the country, '*taille à pan*'—is made expressly for the purpose. It is shaped like a cooper's draw-knife; the loaf is placed against the body, and the blade worked through by strong pressure applied to the two handles. It is not customary to bake more than once a year; in some cottages, a sufficient number of loaves are baked to last two, and even three years.

Our own supply of bread enabled us to dispense with the black substitute honoured by that name; and, indeed, unless we had been gifted with the teeth of the megatherium, or the more tremendous plesiosaurus, I do not know how we could have crushed the dark compound. The cheese was very eatable,

though partaking a little of the hardness of the rye-bread.

But it was to the wine that we paid particular attention. I verily believe that we transferred the entire contents of a pig-skin into our bodies. Very good wine it was, too: in a more elegant vessel, it might have done high duty at a London dinner-table.

It required some little resolution to leave our cool quarters; but the day was far advanced, and we had the toughest portion of our walk before us.

When we asked how much we had to pay, the host carried away the débris of our luncheon and weighed them. The operation had been performed before the viands had been set on the table, and no more was charged for than we had consumed.

I think that, with the exception of the vertical face of the Cirque de Gavarnie, in the Pyrenees, I never ascended any mountain so steep as the Iseran. It springs directly from the valley, and towered, in many places, like a straight wall above us. The path, or track rather, resembled a rocky staircase, and wound to the right or left as the jutting inequalities permitted. The heat was very great, but with every additional hundred yards of elevation, we felt a sensible diminution of the temperature. Close upon our right hand tumbled a superb cataract, which foamed and roared at the base of the precipices beneath us.

So we toiled upwards, resting every quarter of an hour, until we attained the shoulder of the mountain,



which is dotted with chalets, surrounded by rich pasturages. Striking across these, and still ascending, we arrived at the foot of the rocky ridge on the summit of which the Col is situated. The ascent of this ridge was a difficult undertaking; but as we were now above the snow-line, we walked with greater freedom. Large patches of frozen snow lay in the sheltered hollows, and we saw at a greater elevation the glaciers coating the mountain sides.

Much to our guide's astonishment, we paused at every spring and runnel of clear water to drink, although Jacques assured us the indulgence would 'couper nos jambes,' by which I presume he meant that it would weaken us. I do not believe that our copious draughts had any other effect than that of greatly refreshing us.

We were about five hundred feet from the Col, when we saw a chamois, and soon after some marmots. The sight of these animals half crazed our guide, who combined the pleasures of chamois-hunting with his more legitimate calling of agriculturist. 'Ah!' said he, 'if I had but my gun now!' But he had not, and of course the chamois bounded off unscathed, which I dare say he would have done had we each been furnished with a rifle.

There were hunters out, for presently we heard shots, the echoes of which came trembling back from distant mountains. I do not think that we could have found our way unguided up the Col. From the congeries of glaciers gushed innumerable torrents,

which streamed down the rocky rifts, and dashed from ledge to ledge, sending up clouds of spray. Across these torrents our path lay. Generally, they were easily strided over, though a little caution was necessary to avoid slipping down ugly precipices. At one place, where the torrents had joined issue, we had to pass over the seething waters by means of a thin snow bridge, under which they rushed with fearful velocity. The existence of this bridge is a matter of more importance than the traveller is aware of, for it is the only way by which the torrent can be crossed. In warm summers, when the snow melts considerably on the mountain tops, fears are always entertained that this snow bridge will not endure during the time that the passage of the mountain is practicable. It was with some degree of nervousness that I watched the guide pick his way across it. I followed in his footsteps, and, with considerable satisfaction, gained the opposite side safely. Immersion in the torrent would be certain destruction, as immediately below the bridge it leaps down a frightful precipice.

As we approached the Col, my friend became affected by the rarity of the atmosphere, and was obliged to rest every few minutes. Our elevation was 9740 feet; but even at greater heights than this, I have not suffered any inconvenience beyond that arising from fatigue. Learning the position of the Col from the guide, I pushed on, and paused not until I had gained it. Magnificent in the extreme

was the Alpine panorama which surrounded me. It was so overpowering in its immensity and grandeur, that several minutes elapsed before I could clearly study its details. The first impression was that of a mighty sea lashed into fury by a whirlwind, and suddenly frozen; for the eye wandered over interminable tracts of enormous glaciers, pure and unsullied by dirty moraines, from among which rose hundreds of rocky peaks. This effect is produced by the spectator on the Col d'Iseran being nearly on a level with the surrounding mountains, all of which bear glaciers on their brows. I stood, in fact, on one of the battlements of the Alps, in the face of the majesty of nature, and felt as if present at a meeting of the earth and sky. Truly do the mountains declare the glory of God, and not only lead to a consciousness of force, but to an acquaintance with the works of nature. The solitude and 'famine of the ears,' as the Arabs expressively call silence, were most impressive. I felt quite relieved when my friend and the guide made their appearance. We sat down on the crest of the pass, a mere ridge, destitute of all vegetation, save a few stunted lichens, which looked half withered.

Three hours' climbing had given us an appetite, so we ordered the guide to produce his stores. The gourmand cannot appreciate the pleasure of eating who has not feasted on a mountain-top with a mountain appetite. The temperature was below the freezing point, but our bodies were so heated by exercise, that we were

quite warm, and as thirsty as usual. We sent the guide for a lump of frozen snow from the nearest glacier, and filling our drinking-cup from the cold stream which trickled down the ridge, added a little cognac, and iced the mixture. The draught was nectar. We thought that we had never tasted anything half so delicious; and we indulged in cup after cup, until the bliss of drinking expired with the assuagement of our thirst.

It was not long before a sense of chilliness crept over us, compelling us to rise from our stone seats, and resume our march. Previously to starting, Jacques procured an immense mass of frozen snow, through the middle of which he thrust his staff, and shouldering it, carried it down the mountain. None but an experienced guide could have detected the path. It was very precipitous, dipping down in some places almost vertically. I cannot conceive a more desolate or awful position for a lone traveller to be placed in, than on this Col during a fog. The dangers of such a situation were forcibly brought before us, by the number of wooden crosses marking the death-spot of daring peasants who had attempted to cross the pass during seasons of danger. We went merrily down the mountain. Stern winter was soon succeeded by spring, and this by summer, as we descended. Then the frozen snow which our guide had providently burdened himself with, became most grateful. Often we stopped Jacques, and scraping a small quantity from the lump into our cup, drank it in a half-

melted state. It died a lingering death, and did not yield its last life-water until we had descended the mountain.

After plunging down for an hour, we came to an upland valley, through which we passed to the hamlet of Laval. Here we were well inclined to halt, for we were tired, having walked nine hours; but our guide lured us on, by the promise of our finding much better sleeping quarters at Tignes. So on we trudged for two hours more, during which time we passed through the most savage gorge that I have ever seen. It was lined by terrific precipices, which rose up vertically to a stupendous height. Of course, a torrent dashed through the defile. Along this the path was generally carried, though often we had to cross the water by bridges consisting merely of a couple of pine planks. Enormous masses of rock, which had fallen from the impending heights, strewed the bottom of the gorge. Numerous crosses marked the spots where peasants had been struck down and killed by falling rocks. According to our guide, rocky fragments are frequently detached, and render the passage of the defile dangerous.

Happily none came thundering down while we were in the gorge, for we were so exhausted and tired, that I doubt much whether we could have run nimbly, even to save our heads. Deep and dark was the gloom in the lowest and narrowest part of the chasm. As we emerged from it, the sun appeared sinking behind a long line of pines, edging them with threads of gold.

The last mile appeared to us the longest and roughest that we had trudged during the day; and when we arrived at Tignes we were as tired as the wolf in the fable, who cannot lift his tail. The village consisted of some score of small houses grouped round a church, from the tower of which the melodious tones of the evening bell proceeded.

At another time we might have paused to listen, for there is that in a village church-bell, heard amidst the mountains, which strikes

The electric chain with which we're darkly bound;  
but at the present moment all our thoughts and hopes were centred on the inn. We gazed eagerly to the right and to the left as we passed the unhewn stone houses, trusting to see the welcome sign; but Tignes is not sufficiently visited by travellers to warrant such a display. Our guide stopped opposite a house no larger than the others in the hamlet, over the door of which was scrawled in erratic characters, 'Chez Bock.' This was the inn. Jacques entered to announce our arrival, and presently appeared followed by a strapping girl, who communicated the joyful intelligence that we could have beds. She led the way up a rickety staircase outside the house, and unlocking a door, to which it gave access, conducted us into a small cabin-like apartment, provided with two holes in the wall, which we concluded contained the beds.

A narrow table and benches constituted the entire furniture of the room.

Rude as was our lodging, I regarded it with very great satisfaction, and could not help feeling how very fortunate we were to find the only resting-place at Tignes untenanted. But according to M. Bock, tourists here are rare birds. We were the second party that had passed during the entire summer.

The first thing we did was to attend to our feet, which we washed and anointed with tallow and *brandy*, a capital specific against blisters and tenderness.

We had walked about thirty miles,\* and crossed a mountain above nine thousand feet high, which was a fair allowance of exercise for one day. I cannot say much for the resources of M. Bock's larder. Meat was not to be had in the village, so we were obliged to rest satisfied with eggs, bread, cheese, and wine. As soon as we had concluded our repast, two of our host's daughters set to work pounding and shaking the beds, which were stuffed with maize leaves, and gave suspicious tokens of containing other things not inanimate.

However, we were too tired to be very inquisitive or choicé, and as soon as the damsels had vacated our apartment, in which they carefully locked us, we crawled into our holes, and were soon of Sancho's opinion, that the man deserves to be held in blessed remembrance for evermore who invented sleep.

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\* From Lanslebourg to Bonval occupied 4 hours, thence to the summit of the Col  $3\frac{1}{2}$  hours, to Laval 2 hours, and to Tignes 2 hours, making  $11\frac{1}{2}$  hours' walking.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**A**BOUT midnight I was roused by a terrible noise. It seemed as if the population of the village had set to, fighting and screaming under our window. At first I was a little alarmed, but remembering that our door was locked, and feeling very tired, I behaved very philosophically, and lay still until the row ceased, and then I slept till past the dawn of day.

The morning spirit of the Alps was abroad when I rose and threw open our little well-barred window. Slipping on a sufficiency of garments to receive the visit of our waiting damsel with propriety, I called to our guide, whom I saw in the street, and bade him desire the girl to bring us water for our ablutions.

She came, bearing a sort of pie dish, containing about a cupful of water, but as any quantity of this liquid could be had for the asking, I soon exchanged the pie dish for a tub, and with large coarse towels and soap, effected a most satisfactory toilet.

This over, I descended and made inquiries respecting breakfast. ‘Ah, sir,’ said the host, rubbing his hands, ‘I shall be able to give you a capital *déjeuner à la fourchette*. See, sir,’ he added, holding before me an animal freshly decapitated and skinned, which my defective comparative-anatomy education led me to conceive was a hare,—‘here is a magnificent



fellow; see how fat he is;' and he poked his dirty fingers into layers of dingy yellow fat on the animal's sides. 'Ha!' I said, 'a very fat hare, I see.' 'A hare, sir!' replied M. Bock, starting aside at my profound ignorance: 'no, sir, a cat!—a tom-cat—and as fine a one as was ever seen.' My visions of a substantial breakfast were put to immediate flight; however, I disguised my anti-feline feelings, and the host continued, —'You were, I fear, disturbed in the night by us.' 'I heard loud noises,' I replied; 'but, to say the truth, I was so tired that they were almost unheeded, and I knew that you were neither thieves nor murderers.' 'God forbid!' said M. Bock; 'and indeed we were grieved to make the disturbance which we did, but *cette vilaine bête*,' pointing to the cat's carcase, 'has robbed us of so much milk and cheese that we have long been on the watch to kill it. So last night, hearing it in the cellar, we got up, and carefully stopping the hole by which it had entered, we opened the door cautiously, and passing in, closed it behind us. There were six of us, and we had each a knife or hatchet. Striking a light, we beheld the cat's eyes, like two flaming lamps, in a corner of the cellar. My son poked the beast, and we chased him up and down among the pots and pans, until I gave him a *coup-de-grace*, and then we cut off his head. My wife observed what an excellent breakfast he would make for the Messieurs, and here he is, skinned and ready to be cooked.'

'Well,' I said, 'I really am very much obliged for your consideration, but I have a decided antipathy to

cat's flesh ; it may be a prejudice, but I could not eat a morsel of the beast.'

'What,' exclaimed M. Bock, turning the animal round, 'you could not eat so fine a beast as this, fattened, too, on my delicious milk and cheese?'

'No,' I said ; 'though I have no doubt, had you served him up without telling us that it was cat's flesh, we should have eaten it.'

'Ah, then,' said he, 'what a pity it is I told you anything about it!'

The host was evidently mortified at my rejection of the proffered dainty, which, in the event of no tourist arriving, was to furnish a supper for himself and his family.

So we had a vegetable breakfast. As at Bonval, every article was carefully weighed before being placed on the table, and what we left, which was but little, was again weighed, and the balance struck accordingly. How different was all this to what the tourist meets with in a Swiss hotel ; different, too, was the bill, and as this is somewhat of a curiosity, it is annexed, with its original spelling:—

CHEZ BOCK,

Doivent les Voyageurs.

	Francs.	
VINO, QUARTO <i>Bouteilles</i> . . . . .	2	50
<i>Pan, Fromage</i> . . . . .		75
<i>Omlets, et Œufs en robe de chambre</i> . . . . .	1	30
<i>Lito</i> . . . . .	1	50
<i>Cafa</i> . . . . .		60
<i>Conductor</i> . . . . .	1	0
	<hr/>	
	7	65
	<hr/>	

If the reader had seen the mountains of bread, and yellow seas of omelettes which we consumed, he would be as surprised as we were at the moderate sum put down opposite to these items. How much would have been charged for the Tom Cat, had we honoured and pleased the host by eating it, I know not, but if the sum had borne any proportion to the expense which the beast was to M. Bock, it would have been a dear dish.

The bill is in itself ample evidence how little this part of Savoy is travelled. Year after year tourists flock to Switzerland, creating comforts and even luxuries in places which were before their visits entirely uninhabited. The high Alps of Savoy yet remain in their pristine wildness, and happy is the wayfarer amongst them who can find a hole stuffed with maize leaves in which he can rest his weary limbs.

Tignes is set amidst magnificent mountain scenery. At the time of our visit the pasturages were of emeraldine hue, and

The wild cataracts leaped in glory!

There are many of these living adjuncts to enhance the scenery within sight and sound of the village. Looking back upon our route of yesterday, we saw the summit of Mont Iseran, like the apex of a sugar-loaf, terminating the vista formed by the grand and grim gorge through which we had passed.

All was exceedingly beautiful, and the weather harmonised with the scene. In winter the country assumes a very different appearance. Then nothing

but ice and snow are visible, and the waterfalls hang in stiff icy sheets down the precipices.

The inhabitants of Tignes and its vicinity are a fine race of people, independent and prosperous. They breed large numbers of mules, and when the winter sets in, the men leave the village in the care of their wives, and travel through parts of Sardinia and France, to sell their cattle.

We started at eight o'clock, and resumed our march down the valley. I feel that it would be quite impossible to convey any adequate idea of the grandeur—awful grandeur, I may say, of the scenery through which we passed. The path generally runs parallel to the Isère, which increases in importance at every mile. But there are places where it hangs suspended at giddy heights above the ravine, and others where it passes beneath enormous rocks at the bottom, which have been hurled from the precipices. Dense pine forests cast a gloom over the traveller, in keeping with the scenery. There was one spot of peculiar terror. A deep rift in the ravine was crossed by an artificial causeway made by the peasants, of trees, rocks, and stones, jammed into the fissure. This fragile, and, as it seemed to us, treacherous causeway, is unprovided on the side of the abyss with parapet or guard of any kind.

The nature of the path was such that we no longer wondered at seeing so many crosses bearing the melancholy words, *Ici peri*. Some were of very recent erection.

Three hours' walk brought us to a ravine, along one side of which the path is carried, at a vast height, above the torrent. On the opposite side, at a prodigious elevation, appeared a breast-work of stupendous glaciers, immediately under which the small village of La Gure is situated. More than once has it been swept away by the numerous avalanches which fall yearly; but for the sake of a small tract of pasture land, which the shoulder of the mountain affords, the peasants continue to brave the dangers of the place.

We could scarcely believe that a village existed at such a height, and in such a frightful position; the houses seemed almost to touch the glaciers. Yet we were assured that the occupiers of this *cyrie* were well off, and never descended to the valleys to beg.

How monotonous does the life of these mountaineers appear to us; but in their wrestlings and struggles with hard nature they doubtless find some excitement. Their affection for their mountain homes is another extraordinary feature in the character of these people. Much of this may doubtless be ascribed to that innate feeling which causes man to regard with life-enduring love, the land where God's sun first beamed on him, where his lightnings first declared his omnipotence, and his storm-winds moved his soul with pious awe. Nowhere more than among the 'palaces of Nature,—the mighty Alps,' is the soul brought sooner into communion with God. Voltaire himself, with all his wretched infidelity and habit of

scoffing, at the age of eighty-one is said to have poured out on the mountain-top before the rising sun his belief in the Great Cause of all.

‘Dieu puissant, je crois — je crois en toi!’—exclaimed the infirm man, and with each sentence his spirit seemed to leave its mortal home and seek communion with its Creator.

The mountains may be ill-adapted to supply man with food—luxurious food they utterly deny. But cannot contentment—happy, placid contentment, exist without wealth? May we not, when looking at these sturdy peasants, well-clad, and snugly housed as they are, safely pronounce that the pleasures of luxury are compensated—yes, even more than compensated by the hardy enjoyments belonging to the life of a mountaineer? They may be poor, but they are free; the mountains have always been the chosen abode and birth-place of liberty; the lord of the lion-heart and eagle-eye is cradled among cliffs, and his lullaby is the roar of the torrent and the howl of the storm.

It was through the difficult and dangerous defile that we were now traversing, that the Vaudois under their brave leader and pastor, Henri Arnaud, returned to their native valleys in 1689. In August of that year, having met with great persecution under Louis XIV., a band numbering about one thousand crossed the Lake of Geneva, landed at Yvoire in Savoy, traversed that country by Clure and Sallenche, and passing over a high offset of the Alps, descended into the valley of the Isère, up which they went, and

finally succeeded, in the teeth of innumerable difficulties, in passing the Col d'Iseran. Arnaud wrote an account of this expedition, which he dedicated to Queen Anne of England. It is entitled '*Histoire de la glorieuse rentrée des Vaudois dans leurs Vallées*,' and was published in 1710.

After walking during four hours amidst scenes such as I have attempted to describe, and which are emphatically introduced in the Guide-book to the pedestrian as he enters the defile, by the words, '*Here Alpine horrors await the traveller*,' we came to the lovely village of St. Foi, garlanded with green slips of pastures, instead of being surrounded by dense and dark pines, which generally clothe the valleys and defiles.

The view from St. Foi, looking across the valley, is said to be one of the finest in the Alps. It is certainly one of great splendour. Immediately in front rises the huge mountain of Chaffe-quarre\*—a pyramid of pure white, attaining the great elevation of 14,300 feet, which is but little less than that of Mont Blanc. The effect of this mass of snow, seen against a deep blue sky, was most enchanting; and although there were other mountains and grand glaciers within view, we found ourselves continually attracted to this one glorious object.

There is a good inn at St. Foi, where an excellent

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\* I have so called it, because I find it bears this name in the government map accompanying the '*mésure d'un arc du parallèle moyen*,' by the Piedmontese officers. But it has half-a-dozen appellations in as many communes.

bed may be obtained. We halted to lunch, and can speak in high terms of the bread, cheese, and wine.

Desirous of possessing a sketch of the magnificent mountain, we descended the valley to the meadows below St. Foi, where we were assured the best view was obtainable. But when we arrived at the place, which was about half-an-hour's walk from St. Foi, we found that the view was not nearly so good as the one we enjoyed from the inn windows. It was, however, too late to retrace our steps, so we set to work on what lay before us.

As a general rule, I should say that the sketching tourist will act more judiciously in following his own bent than the advice of innkeepers and guides with respect to views, which are held out as admirable subjects for the pencil, and are frequently deficient in the principal qualifications for making a picture. More than once we forsook a good locality in consequence of the high praise which was bestowed on a view higher or lower in a valley, but which, perhaps, could not be drawn at all. If, however, the tourist resolves on sketching the less pleasing scene, I hold it to be positively dishonest to change the position of mountains, or bridges, houses, or rivers, for the purpose of making his sketch prettier or more artistic than a faithful representation of the view before him would allow. For it should be remembered that the sketches are looked at as being representations of what the artist saw on the spot where they were made; and if a mountain be



removed from the head of one valley to that of another, or a church tower put where it is not, for the sake of making a prettier composition, disappointment must inevitably result to him who, remembering the sketch, visits the scene which it professes to depict.

While on the subject of sketching, I may be permitted to recommend to the reader, if, like myself, he be a humble paper-scratcher, the sketching mirror, which, should he not already have used it, he will find a great assistance. It is made of a plate of black glass, about six inches by four, highly polished, and presenting a convex surface. Holding, in the literal sense, this mirror up to nature, an exceedingly beautiful diminished representation of the landscape will be seen, thus enabling the sketcher to form a very excellent notion whether the subject reflected in the mirror would make a good sketch or not. In the Alps, where everything in nature is on a grand scale, it is often exceedingly puzzling to know what part of the landscape should be taken into the sketch, and what left out. The eye, amidst such a breadth and height of magnificence, is overpowered, and can scarcely assign the limits of the proposed sketch. By the aid of the mirror this difficulty can be surmounted, for the artist has merely to move it to-and-fro, until he sees a picture on its surface which will make a pleasing sketch. Then fixing the boundary lines, he has only to turn his face to the landscape, and work within those limits.

‘Chi dura vince,’ is a good motto for mountain travelling; and, indeed, one has need of hard and horny limbs and feet to withstand successfully the battering which the latter undergo during a long Alpine march. My Grenoble boots did me excellent service, and often saved my feet from hard knocks; for, unlike Paddy, whose tenderness for his brogues led him to carry them over his shoulder, and to rejoice when his feet received a contusion instead of the shoes, I was well pleased when I found that my broad soles came in for hard knocks in place of my feet. It is curious how steadily one sets-to abusing a path encumbered by sharp-edged rocks towards the close of a long day’s walk. In the morning, the roughest causeway is passed over without a murmur, but towards evening a change has come over the traveller, and if a bit of the path presents more inequalities than usual, it is sure to excite his wrath. We must have been very tired, for we both agreed that we had never seen so stony a road as that from St. Foi to St. Maurice. It was literally a long stone quarry, and my friend suggested that it must have been here, and not in America, as the Yankees insist, that Noah deposited the ballast of his ark.

For several miles we observed the peasants stripping the mountain ash trees of all their leaves, for their cattle during winter; and we could not help thinking that they would, for our comfort as well as for their own, have been more profitably employed in smoothing the horridly rough road.

We arrived at Bourg St. Maurice at six o'clock. A smart sign displayed in golden characters the words, 'Hôtel des Voyageurs,' which, although but an humble inn, seemed a palace, after our 'gîte' of last night. We obtained two good beds, and a dinner of such meat as Christians generally eat.

The following morning we were off at eight o'clock, and held our way still down the valley, which now assumed a softer and more pastoral character. Stupendous mountains continued to inclose it. Before us rose the jagged crest of the Col de Bonhomme, over which I had journeyed a few years ago, and to the right the entrance to the pass of the little St. Bernard opened out. It was tantalizing to be so near the gigantic glacial valley of the Allée Blanche—which I take to be one of the grandest scenes in the Alps—without re-visiting it; and it was with considerable reluctance that I passed the defile leading to the Col, from whence its magnificence first bursts on the eye.

At mid-day we arrived at Moutiers, the chief town of the Tarantaise. Here we visited the salt-works, which are exceedingly curious. They belong to the government, and are readily shown to strangers. The process by which the salt is fabricated is very peculiar.

In the deep defile of the Doron, about six miles from Moutiers, at the base of a great mass of limestone, rise copious springs, containing 1.75 per cent. of salt. It appears surprising that it should be found

worth while to erect evaporating machinery for so small a proportion of the saline ingredient; but by a very simple and inexpensive contrivance, an annual profit of about 80,000 francs is gained. The water, which flows from the springs through wooden pipes, is pumped into large tanks, from whence it runs along narrow channels, and drips on bundles of blackthorn faggots. In its passage through the faggots, nearly the whole of the sulphate is deposited as an incrustation on the bundles, and so much water is lost by evaporation, that what remains contains twice as much salt as when it first left the springs. By repeating this operation three or four times, the quantity of salt eventually obtained is increased to 25 per cent., after which the solution is conveyed to the boiling-houses, and crystallized in the usual manner.

The faggots become, in the course of two or three years, so thickly incrustated with sulphate of lime that they break, and require to be changed. To avoid this troublesome process, an ingenious Savoyard, of the name of Buttel, substituted cords for faggots. The cords are tightly stretched from the roofs of the evaporating-houses to the bottom, a height of about sixty feet, and are placed as near to each other as possible, taking care to allow sufficient space for ventilation. The water trickles down the cords, depositing in its course the sulphate of lime, which in time forms a cylinder round them. When the cylinders become too bulky, they are detached by a cutting instrument, and the cords are ready for

further use. Unless the latter be damaged by the stripping operation, they remain serviceable for ten and sometimes fifteen years.

It is a curious sight to see the long rows of white, sparkling stalagmites and stalactites,—for the cords, being fastened to the roof and floor, fulfil the conditions of both these natural curiosities; and when the sun's rays pierce the glittering columns, and the light becomes shivered into the prismatic colours, the spectacle partakes of the legendary character of fairy-land.

The quantity of salt made at these works averages 1900 tons annually. During dry seasons, the produce is considerably increased.

There is a curious fact stated with respect to the springs. At the time of the great earthquake of Lisbon, they ceased to flow for forty-eight hours; when the reflux took place, the quantity was considerably augmented, but the proportion of salt in the water was diminished.

Moutiers, though the capital of the 'Tarantaise,' is deficient in interest as a town, possessing no buildings, public or private, to arrest the traveller's attention. It is remarkable, however, as having been a bishop's see for thirteen centuries; and for the unbroken history of its church from the first archbishopric in 420, to the last in 1793.

After dinner we set off for l'Hôpital Conflans, which is situated at the confluence of the Arly and Isère, about sixteen miles from Moutiers.

It was a positive relief when we turned the last flanking buttress of the mountains inclosing the valley of the Isère, in which we had been so long imprisoned. The scenery amid which we had been travelling was of so imposing and awful a character, that our senses were kept on a perpetual strain of excitement. As the ear, during long-continued trumpet blasts and clashing of cymbals in an oratorio, yearns for soft melody, so did our eyes desire to rest on less savage scenes than those which had been present to us since we left Lanslebourg. Now our vision ranged over a more extended horizon. The huge Alps had softened down to far-reaching ridges of swelling hills—mountains they would be called in our fatherland; but compared to those giants over and under which we had been marching, they seemed but hills.

As we drew near l'Hôpital, evening fell on the landscape. The entire valley, rich with vines and maize, was filled with an aureate flood of light. The clear green waters of the river Arly, undefiled by mountain snows, flowed musically along. The hill-sides were sprinkled here and there with ruined castles, whose time-worn stones were clothed with amber-coloured moss, and lichens of delicate hues. Herds of lowing cattle were coming down from their upland pastures, and groups of well-formed and well-dressed peasants gave life and animation to the scene.

The inn at l'Hôpital, kept by the Frères Geny, has some pretensions to be ranked with the hotels of

Switzerland. We were shown to a bed-room of enormous dimensions, decorated in a handsome manner, and our supper displayed a higher order of cuisine than we had been lately accustomed to. We should retain a pleasant remembrance of the establishment, had it not happened that one of the two brothers who managed it, or it may be both, cheated us shamefully.

Wishing to proceed the following day as far as Annecy, we resolved to hire a char to take us to Duing, on the lake, and to walk the rest of the way. According to our Guide-book and maps, the road passed by Ugine, where, in the neighbourhood, stands a large ruined castle, which we wished to see. But, on account of the long *détour* made by this road, a new one had recently been constructed, which diminishes the distance between the two places nearly one-half. We were entirely unacquainted with this fact, and advantage was taken of our ignorance; for we were charged for the long route, and driven the short one. Instead of our drive occupying four hours, as we were told it would, going by Ugine, scarcely two hours elapsed before we came within sight of Lake Annecy, and shortly afterwards we stopped opposite the Castle of Duing. And for this drive we paid twenty francs. We did so because we had promised to pay that sum to the driver on arriving at the castle; but I must say, that had his master been the coachman, he would not have gained his money so easily.

The colour of Lake Annecy is precisely like

that of the Rhone where it issues from the Lake of Geneva. In the vicinity of Château Duing, the shores are picturesque, but there is a sad falling off between that place and Annecy, as we found to our cost; for, hoping better things, we walked, and might as well have tramped over a French highway. Indeed, the road is carried so much inland, that the lake is hardly visible. We consoled ourselves by a little exercise of philosophy, remembering that we could not always expect to travel through pleasant places. The Bishop of Annecy must have great faith either in his own powers, or the gullibility of the people of his diocese, for we read on crosses at the roadside this comfortable promise:—‘H. G. R. de Thollaz, Evêque d’Annecy, accorde quarante jours d’indulgence à ceux qui diront du fond du cœur un acte de contrition devant cette croix.’ But after all, this is nothing to the Pope, who, according to the celebrated picture by Raffaele in the Vatican, known as ‘The Mass of Bolsena,’ vouchsafed to all those who would say five Pater-nosters, five Aves, and one Credo, twenty-six thousand years and twenty-six days of pardon. How condescending and generous of his Holiness to throw in the odd twenty-six days! This part of Savoy is bigoted and priest-ridden to a lamentable degree. It is curious that with the disposition manifested to promote political freedom, the chains of priestcraft should still be permitted to entangle and weigh down the minds of the people. The Annéciens, as the inhabitants are called, are all



on the *qui vive* for complete liberty. Their Mar-seillaise is the ‘Chant des Alpes,’ of which the following is a stanza :—

Perçant la nuit profonde,  
Nous cachant le soleil  
La liberté féconde,  
Se montre à son reveil,  
Et nos Alpes blanchies  
Voyant cette clarté  
De leurs voix affranchies,  
Chantent la Liberté.

Annecy overpowered us with disappointment. We were led to expect a picturesque town, beautifully situated, as the *Guide-book* says, ‘on the borders of the lake.’ To the title of picturesque, if by that word is meant what will make a picture, it has no manner of pretension ; and with regard to its situation, instead of being on the borders of the lake, it stands on a reedy, sedgy, marshy plain, at a considerable distance from the water.

There are some buildings of old date that would tell in a sketch ; but as a whole, it is a dull, gloomy town, holding out no temptation to the traveller to linger in it.

So, after dining at the ‘Hôtel de Genève,’ we hired a charabanc to take us to Geneva, where we arrived, amid the most brilliant play of summer lightning, at half-past nine o’clock.

## CHAPTER XIX.

GENEVA was so full of tourists, refugees, and emigrants, that we found it a matter of no slight difficulty to obtain accommodation. At length, however, we met with a large apartment in the Hôtel de la Couronne. It was *au quatrième*, but as it faced Lake Lemman we were gainers rather than losers by the elevation.

After our roughing among the Savoy Alps, we were not insensible to the comforts of our excellent hotel, and we gave evidence of duly appreciating the luxurious softness of our couches by lying on them until a late hour in the morning.

The landlord of the Hôtel Royal at Lanslebourg had redeemed his promise respecting the transmission of our portmanteaus to Geneva. We found them at the door of our apartment, perfectly safe, and the charge for conveying them was only nine francs.

We remained some days at Geneva, not for sight-seeing purposes, for previous visits to that miniature Paris had made me acquainted with its few show places,—but to rest from our fatigues. And a most admirable place it certainly is for the *dolce far niente*. One is never tired of gazing on the peaceful lake, which seems lovelier after the wild trance of Alpine wander-

ing. And what can surpass the excellence of the table-d'hôtes at the leading hotels? They have but one fault, which is, that the dishes are too numerous; but this is a prevailing evil of all large dinners on the Continent. In France they have long been celebrated for the abundance of their dishes, and it is recorded that Charles VI. published an edict, in 1420, prohibiting more than two dishes and a soup at dinner. But, as historians relate, Charles VI. died mad.

I observed a dish at our table, which, I presume, has been introduced in compliment to the English. It consisted of a pile of mealy potatoes, served up in their jackets, and surrounded by a snow-white napkin. They were handed round as a separate 'plat,' and duly honoured by the guests.

Geneva has long been a nursery of republicanism and democracy. Its position favours agitation, and when neighbouring states are convulsed by political troubles, patriots and demagogues crowd its coffee-houses, secure of remaining unmolested so long as they hatch no treason to the Helvetic Confederation. At the time of our visit, in September last, it was calculated that there were two thousand Italian refugees in Geneva. The cafés were full of them from morning till midnight. But they were not welcome guests to the proprietors of these establishments, for they took possession of all the tables and chairs, and rarely indulged in anything more expensive than *eau sucrée*, or diluted lemonade. How the

fellows gesticulated ! With flashing eyes, and their wild black locks dashed back from their foreheads, they gave vent to their patriotism, consigning to eternal perdition the rulers over the fair plains of Lombardy. The majority of the young men wore a feather in their hats, which was displayed as prominently as possible. During our stay in the town, intelligence arrived that the French government, uneasy at the proximity of so many determined and reckless characters, meditated a demand on the Swiss States for the expulsion of the refugees. This, of course, occasioned the unhappy fugitives fresh trouble ; however, they were soon made aware that the descendants of that once spirited little republic, which had set up in olden time the banner of religious tolerance, were in no way disposed to turn out those who had entered their town for safety and protection.

The day after our arrival at Geneva was Sunday. It was gratifying to see the respectful manner in which the day was observed. Every shop was closed, and every house of God seemed to draw crowded congregations within its walls. I attended service at the church attached to the Town Hospital, which is lent to the English residents. The congregation numbered about two hundred persons. I was sorry to hear that the late revolutionary troubles had pressed heavily on the prosperity of the English church, as the number of English residing at Geneva had so

greatly fallen off, that the funds for supporting the establishment were barely adequate for the purpose.

Geneva has lost one of its show-places. The Chateau of Ferney has fallen into the hands of the spoiler, who has deprived it of many Voltaire associations. This is the deed of a M. David Septmoncel, a retired Parisian jeweller, who has lately purchased the château and estate, amounting to 900 acres, for 280,000 francs. The two rooms which were preserved nearly in the same state that Voltaire left them, have been entirely stripped. It was melancholy to see the change. Modern fashionable Parisian furniture in the place of that which had been gazed at with curiosity by thousands of visitors.

The Chinese paper which covered the walls of Voltaire's bedroom has been torn down, and would, in all probability, have been entirely destroyed, had not a few fragments been preserved by some people of Geneva. The landlord of the Hôtel de la Couronne, from whom I have received much kindness during several visits to his house, was so good as to give me a piece of the paper.

It may have been the desire of M. Septmoncel to eradicate every vestige of a man who, according to the statement of even his panegyrist, Condorcet, made use of his powerful abilities to destroy Christianity, declaring this to be the object of his writings; but although Voltaire was the great Coryphæus of Deism, it is impossible to forget that education, tem-

perament, and circumstances placed him in opposition to all established institutions; and hence he laboured to destroy rather than to reform or rebuild.

The destruction of a few inanimate objects formerly belonging to Voltaire cannot cause him to be forgotten; nor, indeed, is it desirable that his memory should cease to be remembered, for his life carries a great moral, which must advance instead of retarding the progress of Christianity.

The Genevese inn-keepers mourn over the change of 'Ferney's' fortunes; still, however, the grounds remain as laid out by Voltaire, and there are few shady walks so sweet and pleasant in a summer's day as that arched over by mantling trees, where he used to walk up and down, dictating to his secretary.

I was strolling one evening, between eight and nine o'clock, on the wooden bridge which spans the Rhone as it rushes from the Lake of Geneva, when my attention was arrested by seeing a man fishing. His mode of performing was singular. Four large hooks were attached to the end of a line, on each of which a large earthworm was placed. The hooks were so arranged that they hung clear of each other. The bait was cast into the Rhone, and allowed to be carried down as far as the second bridge, about one hundred yards distant. Then it was agitated by a series of jerks, which gave a life-like motion to the worms. In this way, the fisherman told me that

trout of as much as forty pounds' weight were sometimes taken. After looking at the *modus operandi* for some time, I asked the man to allow me to try my luck for a few minutes, to which he willingly assented.

I had not jerked the line more than half-a-dozen times, when I felt a tug which nearly cut my finger. I had struck a fish, and judging by the strain on the line, of which fully a hundred yards were now out, it was one of no small size. How the fellow swept through the rushing waters! Not that I saw him, for the only light proceeded from the gas-lamps on the bridge, but I knew by the direction of the line that he was careering madly through his element, hoping to repeal the unlooked-for union which he had effected between his jaws and the hooks. How to land him was a perfect mystery,—indeed, I would not have given a penny for my chance of securing him. Following the advice of my friend, I gradually hauled in the line, availing myself of every pause in the fish's struggles to shorten the distance between us. When I had taken in about twenty yards, my hopes of capturing him increased greatly, for it was evident that he was well hooked, otherwise he would assuredly have got off in his desperate rushes and leaps.

Proceeding gradually and cautiously, I at length got the fish within twenty yards of the bridge. When he came to the surface, his sides shone like silver, and

we began to regard him as our prize. But still it puzzled me to divine how he was to be landed, for the fisherman had neither landing-net, nor gaff; he, however, had no misgivings about the matter. A short distance below the bridge there is a slip, or inclined plane, giving access to the Rhone. To the foot of this slip I gradually conducted the fish, which by this time was nearly exhausted. We then crossed the bridge, and descending the slope, I brought him to the edge, and watching my opportunity, drew the captive's head above the water, when the fisherman, who was standing up to his ancles in the stream, put his fingers through the gills, and secured the prize. It was a fine trout, but not a forty-pounder; though from the great strain on the line, proceeding partly from the swiftness of the Rhone, I had put him down as not far short of that weight. The fisherman was highly delighted. With an accuracy common to the craft, he pronounced the weight as between five and six pounds, and forthwith took the fish to the Hôtel des Bergues, where it was weighed, and found to be five pounds and a half. He received eleven francs for it, at the rate of two francs a pound. I endeavoured to prevail on him to sell it to the Hôtel de la Couronne, that I might have had an opportunity of tasting my capture; but he was under promise to supply the 'Bergues' with trout.

He told me that he generally spent the entire night fishing, and that he seldom caught more than one

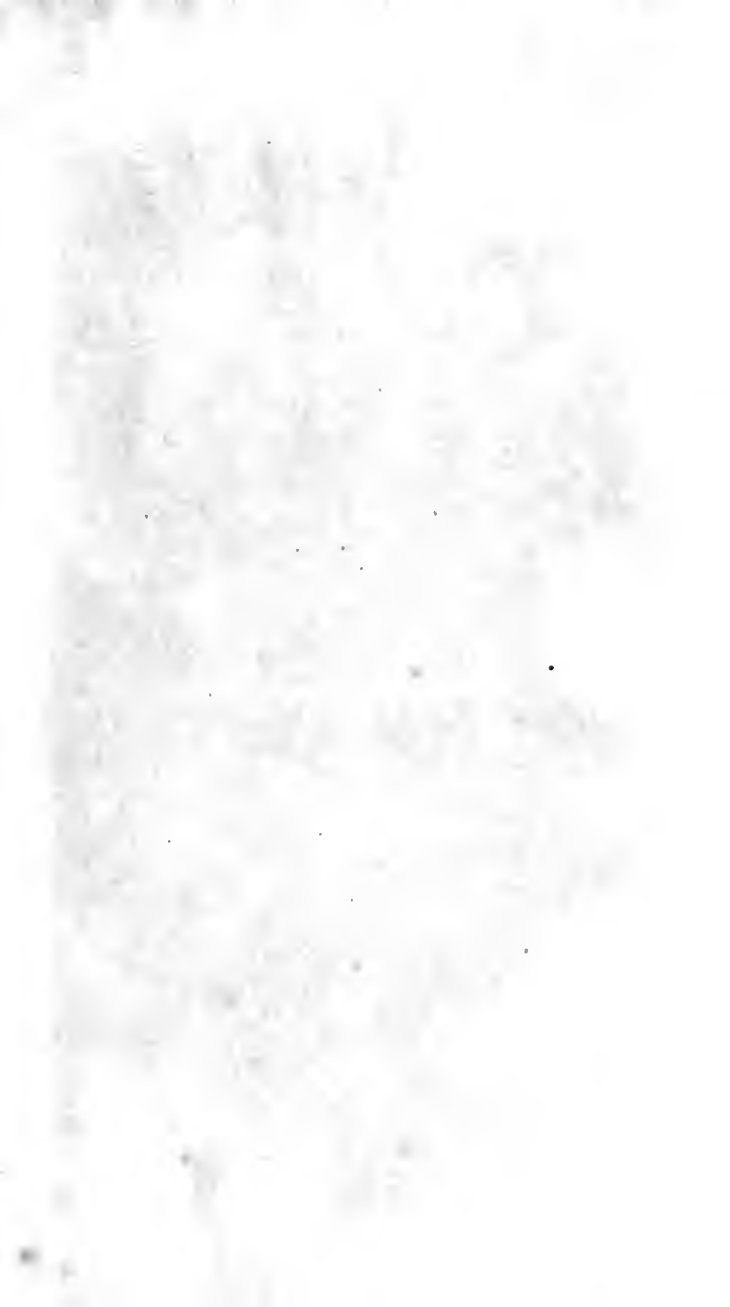


trout each night; and frequently a whole night passed without getting even a run. The number of trout has very much diminished of late years. I returned to my hotel much pleased with my piscatorial adventure.

The following day we left Geneva, and journeyed homewards through Dijon and Paris.

As it is possible that among my readers there may be some disposed to follow the route along which these pages have carried them in imagination, I consider they will be pleased to know that the tour, which I need hardly say is capable of yielding great enjoyment, will be found considerably less expensive than travelling in Switzerland or Germany. That is, provided the tourist does not indulge in ptarmigan and champagne dinners, and is content to rough it now and then. And, as the lights of experience are valuable guides, I may add, that in our case—always patronizing the first-class hotels, for I hold it to be bad policy to resort to others: dining at tables-d'hôte, and not breaking through the excellent country custom of allowing the payment of servants to be included in the bill,—our total expenses amounted to twenty-six shillings a day. A solitary traveller would spend somewhat more than half this sum daily, for, as is well known, there is always a saving by having a companion during a tour.

LONDON:  
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS,  
4, CHANDOS STREET.



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